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HESTON CHURCH.

PARSON AND PEOPLE;

OR,

INCIDENTS IN THE EVERY-DAY LIFE OF A CLERGYMAN.

BY THE

REV. EDWARD SPOONER, M. A.,

VICAR OF HESTON, MIDDLESEX.

FROM THE SECOND LONDON EDITION, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY

AN AMERICAN CLERGYMAN.

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PREFACE

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

The book which is herewith presented to the American public, besides its intrinsic interest, possesses a high representative value. It is a fruit of that great movement of spiritual life, which, for fifteen years or more, has been making such wonderful progress in the Church of England; and which, nevertheless, has so little "come with observation," that it has hardly drawn attention, except from the thoughtful men who are most quick to discern the signs of the times.

Full as the skies are of happy omens of the advancement of the kingdom of heaven, there is none among them all more hopeful than this "Great Awakening" of the Church of England to spiritual life and Christian labours throughout the British Empire, and especially among the "lost sheep" of English parishes in town and country. It is distinguished from former religious movements in the history of England, in that it is not the movement of a party, without the established Church or within it,

but, for the first time, the movement of the church itself, as the organized and corporate Christianity of the nation, towards the fulfilment of the responsibility which it has acknowledged and claimed, but never discharged. There is no more important fact in the religious history of our generation than this. It is the removing out of the way of the scandal that has been commonly alleged against that institution—that heretofore whatever has been achieved, on the large scale, for the salvation of the *people* of England, has been so much wrought for the detriment of the *Church* of England.

Thank God for better things in that church! "If the diminishing of her be the riches of the world, how much more her fullness! If the casting away of her be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of her be, but life from the dead!"

The evidences of this change are many, and widely diverse. And it need not surprise us if some of the symptoms of returning animation be eccentric, and even painful. It is the resuscitation, not the asphyxia, that is attended with struggle and spasm. The sharp and earnest controversy with which, within the church, the very principles of Christian truth are now put in issue, is a better sign than the tranquillity which it has superseded. It is more hopeful to see a wrong-headed bishop pertinacious of error to his own cost, than to see a whole bench of bishops comfortably holding the truth in indifference.

A more pleasing sign of religious life in the

national church of England, is found in the administration of the government in the interest of Christianity. Beyond the limits of the British Islands, until within the memory of the present generation, the imperial government has been by turns infidel, popish, pagan—any thing but Christian. The first experience of American missionaries in a foreign field was, that they were repelled from the coast of heathen India, with one hand, by a British government which, with the other, was furnishing escort and honour to idolatrous processions, and decorations to heathen gods. Now, the settled policy of British diplomacy is the common protection of British and American missionaries alike, in all parts of the world;* the government of India, after learning a bloody lesson of the folly of coalitions with paganism, is conducted, in some respects, on Christian principles; the setting-up of the institutions of the Church of England in all her colonies, so that there is no considerable colonial centre without its staff of clergy, is at least the emblem of a Christian purpose in the national church. At home, even the systematic exploration, by parliamentary commission or otherwise, of the vast field of home missions, is no ancient and customary thing; but the actual energetic movement of the forces of the church as a body, to the accomplishment of its prop-

* We are glad to imply that the late acts of Sir Henry Bulwer at Constantinople, by which the privileges of religious liberty, so nobly won by his predecessor, seemed to be betrayed, are only a transient lapse from a settled policy.

er work in the evangelization of the people, is a thing of yesterday.*

Of all possible proofs of the return of Christ to his church, the best and surest are found in such labours as are represented to us in this book,—"*Parson and People.*" "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached." Need we look further for Him that should come? Blessed is he whosoever is not offended; but who, overlooking all limitations of party, and preconception, and prejudice, is able to recognize the works of Christ by the hands of his true disciples.

We have made bold to speak thus of this book, because it seems to us one of the most distinctively and purely *Christian* books that we have ever met. But for the bright and vivid colouring which it reflects from the modern British scene in which it is laid, the narrative might seem almost like a new chapter from the genial and affectionate pen of the evangelist and historian, Luke, for its earnestness and hearty simplicity. We know the author only from this single work. From this we gather that he is devoutly and intelligently attached to the national church and ritual under which he has been reared. But beyond this, it would be difficult for the most acute reader

* See, on this point, among the most recent works, "The Church's Work in our Large Towns," by George Huntington, M.A., Clerk in orders of the cathedral and parish of Manchester. London, Parkers, 1864.

to detect in him the colour of any religious faction or party whatever. His good works are of that complete and Christlike sort, that they reflect all the rays of the sunbeam, and shine before men with a white light. His gospel is not preached out of envy and strife.

But while the book and its author are eminently Christian, and thus belong to the universal communion of saints, they are at the same time most characteristically English. And this seems to us an additional reason for reprinting it. For if ever there was need for us to remind ourselves, in every way, of the good and noble things that are to be found in the English character, it is now. But it gives occasion for pointing out distinctly some of the particulars wherein the work of an English parish differs from that which ordinarily claims the attention of American Christians:—

1. The principal point of difference between English and American evangelization, is one which is entirely in favour of the old country,—the existence of a *parish-system*, "the greatest and most beneficent," says Conybeare,* "of our national institutions." The parish-system was, of old, at least in New England, one of our excellent heritages from the mother-country. But so entirely obsolete has the thing become, that the very meaning of the *word* has been lost from our American vocabulary. The idea of a

* Essays Ecclesiastical and Social, from the Edinburgh Review. Essay I., "The Church in the Mountains," p. 3.

territorial precinct, within which the care of the souls of the whole population (except so far as they should freely commit themselves to other fellowship) should be the recognized responsibility of an organized church within its limits, has been forgotten out of mind. A minister's "parish," in our American dialect, is his pewholders.

Perhaps the only communion of churches in the United States, which has had ample opportunity of carrying out effectively a parochial system, so as to reach with Christian influences the entire population of any considerable region, is that of the old established churches of New England. How unhappy, that when the mild laws of church establishment by which these churches were originally charged with parochial responsibility were repealed, the churches, instead of nobly proving that the highest organization, and most faithful administration, of a parish-system is in no wise incompatible with the voluntary system, should have thrown away their birthright, and, instead of being the servants of all men for Christ's sake, should have contented themselves with maintaining chapels for their own adherents, and with fitful and unsystematic efforts at aggressive evangelism!

2. Another important difference between the circumstances of the English and the American evangelist, is found in the more complete and rigid stratification of society in the old country. A blind imitation of even the most eminent examples of success in English parishes, without keeping this

difference in mind, has certainly not seldom hurt the usefulness of very well-intended enterprises in this country. The labour of personal visitation among the poor requires far less of tact and ingenuity where the visitant may be sure of being welcomed as a benefactor descending from a higher sphere, and conferring honour by his approach. "Ragged Schools" and "Workingmen's Churches" may be thankfully attended by those who accept a low station in life, and have no aspirations above it. But in communities of Americans born on the soil, this disposition is to be found only in the lowest grade of moral debasement. Call it what you will, a false shame, or an honest pride, there is a feeling among the people whom we most wish to draw and hold within the influences of the church of Christ, which is quick to suspect and repel all patronizing or "missionary" assistance. The best argument yet offered for the usage of levying a price upon the seats in a place of public worship, is this, that after actual experiment it is declared rather to conciliate than to repel the classes of people in whose behalf it has been denounced,—making them partners in the church, and not mere beneficiaries.

But, after making all deductions of this sort, we still find in this book a vast variety of happy suggestions, which need no modification to adapt them to our use in America. The state of society which the author so picturesquely describes in his opening chapter is more American than any thing else in

Great Britain. In the best features of the picture, it might be claimed at once by us as a family portrait. The distinction which used to be drawn between the two countries, in this respect, that in England the rural districts, in America the towns, are distinctively the seats of immorality and irreligion,—is found, on examination, to disappear; and it is found in both countries, that if the cities are "sinks of iniquity," the country places are sources of it.* The outline of our author's plan of labour must be substantially followed by intelligent and thorough labourers everywhere. A census of the field, not for the gathering of "startling facts," but as a basis for the laying out of the work, must always be among the first things. The unpaid agency of Christian laymen and women must everywhere be the main assistance of the pastor and preacher. District visitation from house to house must be the prominent method of personal work; it will ever be found that the chief value of tract-distribution lies in the personal visitation by Christian people which is incidental to it, and it may often be better for omitting the tracts. Devout study and prayer, and deeds of mercy and charity, must be the feet and hands of the church of Christ, with which being diligent, she shall both seek and save the lost.

May God speed this good book!

LEONARD WOOLSEY BACON.

BROOKLYN, E. D., *March*, 1865.

* See the Reports of the Committee of Home Evangelization of the State of Connecticut, for 1860 and 1861. These reports are based on actual canvass of large parts of the State.

PREFACE.

If many great and powerful writers deem it needful to apologize to the public for launching a book upon the world, it may seem doubly imperative on the writer of so fragmentary a work as the present to do so. Commenced as a means of distracting my mind from some anxieties, and as a relief from continuous bodily pain, this little book has grown under my hands, till I have been urged to print it, as setting forth, in some degree, the many and strange scenes a clergyman daily meets with, and the difficulties which he may have to encounter. The tales narrated, under the head of "Pastoral Visits," must be looked upon merely as specimens; for it would be easy greatly to multiply their number, and to draw pictures from real life both of brighter and of darker hue, did not a fear of wounding the hearts of those still living, or of seeming capable of a breach of

confidence, restrain me. For this reason, I have confined myself strictly to such scenes as, while they are actually true in all their details, can yet be described without any fear of the above-mentioned evils; and I trust that nothing that I have written will wound the feelings of one living person.

Again, I would not for a moment appear to arrogate to myself any peculiar familiarity with tales and sights of woe; there are thousands of my brethren in the ministry who have a far deeper acquaintance with these, and who could narrate tales of actual life of deeper and more thrilling incident. It is impossible for those who live merely on the surface of society to guess what strange sights are revealed to those who—like doctors, lawyers, or clergymen—are daily called to fathom the under-currents of life. All such persons know that "truth is stranger than fiction," and that even a country village has its laughable comedies and its tragedies of deepest hue.

In my slight sketch of a suburban parish and of a begging parson, while I have endeavored from my own experience to set forth some of the difficulties we may be called upon professionally to encounter, I again do not claim for myself any peculiarity of lot. There are hundreds of our town clergy to

whom I should, by force of contrast with their own position, seem indeed to have fallen amid pleasant places, and who have had to face tenfold greater difficulties, without a tithe of the same warm assistance and sympathy. My toils have indeed all been lightened, by the sympathy of the laity, in a measure to which I cannot do justice, but for which I heartily thank God; and my hope is that some who have not as yet thought, or have as yet been utterly ignorant of what a "begging parson" has to encounter, may treat the applications of such men at least with a little more patience, perhaps even with a greater amount of active sympathy. Of one thing let me assure them,—no such man ever yet became a beggar by choice, or till all other means of effecting his purpose had been tried in vain. Actual experience often enables me at once to divine what the writer of one of those begging-letters must have gone through, or must be actually encountering, before he "ventured to ask his aid;" and if he has no *local claim* upon you, he has, at all events, the claim of being a brother-countryman toiling for brother-countrymen, and a brother-Churchman labouring in the cause of the one great Head of the Church; and has the *general claim* upon you which is given him by the parable of the Good Samaritan,

and by the tenth verse of the sixth chapter of Galatians.

With these few words of explanation and apology, I launch forth this little book, earnestly praying that He who alone can prosper may bless its feeble pages to His glory and the good of His Church

April 29, 1863.

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PARSON AND PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

A SUBURBAN PARISH.

What is a Suburban Parish? It is almost easier to define what it is not, than what it is; but the words will convey different impressions to different minds. One will dream of quiet country villages, such as still linger within sight and almost sound and smell of London; another will depict to himself streets of palatial houses, grand carriages, and swarms of liveried footmen; another will think of a huge succession of small "self-contained, or semi-detached villas," out of which hosts of business-men issue regularly at from half-past eight to half-past nine in the morning, two-thirds of these men being engaged in buttoning a glove as they leave their own doors, and by omnibuses, railways, broughams, hacks, or on their own legs, hasten away to the marts of

commerce; others, again, will think of some low, marshy swamps, on which thousands are already congregated, and where huge boards announce that "Eligible Building Sites" are still to let; their eligibility, to an impartial witness, seeming to consist in the moral certainty that almost every house erected on them must naturally be liable to an annual visit of typhus fever, ague, or cholera. If it be generally true that "one-half of the world does not know how the other half lives," this fact doubly applies to London; and I would, from personal acquaintance with my subject, draw a picture of a fair average suburban parish, and show some of the many scenes that a clergyman may have to witness in it.

To a hasty visitor, my suburban parish would have appeared to be a small triangle, formed by the meeting of two main roads, and bounded by them and by a third road, which was intended to connect them together at about a quarter of a mile from their point of divergence. Fronting the roads there were a few tolerably large houses, but the side streets presented generally a mass of small, tidy, and very respectable-looking houses, many of them with little gardens both in front and behind, and, of course, in many of the gardens the inevitable pink almond-tree of the London sub-

urbs—the only plant, except the chrysanthemum, which seems to flourish the more in an abundance of smoke. In reality, in that small triangle there were, according to a private census which I took, about 1,320 houses, and several blank spaces for further building, and a population of upwards of eleven thousand persons. Of these 1,320 houses, not more than forty were ten-roomed houses; the others had only four, six, or eight rooms apiece. These six and eight-roomed houses were all marvellously alike; if you had gone over one of them, you had in reality gone over all, because, without the least imagination, you could easily guess where any point of difference, if it existed at all, must lie. By whom were these houses inhabited? By a most miscellaneous multitude, which we will divide into four classes:—

1st. Professional men — lawyers, surgeons, artists, musicians; men in business—junior partners, clerks in Government offices, in large warehouses, in the British Museum, in banks, and insurance and railway offices; head shopmen in the very large shops; and some few retired naval and military officers living on their pensions. These, for the most part, were married, and inhabited separate houses; keeping one, two, or three maid-servants, according to the size of their families,

but never thinking of a man-servant or carriage. At one time we had only one livery in the parish, and that was worn by a surgeon's page, and two broughams, belonging also to surgeons, which, as one of the owners informed me, "were no more to be reckoned as carriages than butchers' carts were, being kept only for professional purposes" (the comparison was his, not mine, reader).

2dly. Unmarried men—junior clerks, lawyers' clerks, shopmen, buyers, assistants in the British Museum, and in the Bank of England; aged men living on small annuities; widows and children of naval and military men, living on pensions; and numbers of persons "who had seen better days, and been reduced." These mostly lodged in apartments let by those of the first class who were in more straitened circumstances, or by a host of persons who took houses on speculation, and lived on their lodgers, earning thereby a most precarious and unsatisfactory subsistence.

3dly. Upper workmen in regular employ; railway-porters, guards, engineers, engine-fitters, and pointsmen;* carpenters, masons, plumbers, and painters; picture-cleaners, warehousemen, labourers, &c., &c. These lived either in the smallest houses, or in apartments where the house was held

* *i. e.*, switch-tenders.

under one landlord, but divided between two or three families.

4thly. Under-workmen, men with no certain employment, gardeners, horsekeepers to omnibuses and cabs, omnibus drivers and conductors, cab-drivers, and all the vast host of what are commonly called ground labourers and jobmen. These chiefly lived in single apartments, which served them for bed-room and parlour and all; or "took a house," occupied two rooms themselves, and let out the others, in hopes, by this contrivance, of living rent-free.

Though I have classed the population under these four heads, it is necessary for me to say that classification in such a case is almost impossible; and it is as impossible for any one not very conversant with London life to form any, even the least, idea of the multiplicity of occupations represented by the inhabitants of one London street. I once had the curiosity to make a list of the occupations of the parents of the children on the registers of our various day-schools, exclusive of the ragged-schools. I annex it, as corroborative of this statement:—

Actor	Artist	Chemist
Agent	Clockmaker	Commercial traveller
Ale agent	Clerk	

Confectioner
Compositor
Cook-shop keeper
Cabdriver
Cabinetmaker
Carver and gilder
Carpenter
Candlemaker
Cats'-meat man
Chainmaker
Cheesemonger
Coal-merchant
Coalheaver
Carman
Cook
Coffee-house keeper
Cricketer
Copperplate printer
Coachman
Currier
Baker
Bargeman
Broker
Bricklayer
Brewer
Brickmaker
Builder
Butcher
Butler
Draper's assistant
Dairyman
Drum-major
Dressmaker
Engineer
Engine-cleaner
Fire-engine maker
Gardener
Gasfitter
Grocer
Grainer
Horsekeeper
Hosier
Ironmonger
Ink-stand maker
Japanner
Jewel-case maker
Joiner
Labourer
Laundress
Leatherdresser
Lithographic printer
Medical Staff, Chatham
Missionary, City
Milkman
Mason
Musician
Navvy
Newsvender
Omnibus-driver
Omnibus-conductor
Parcels delivery man
Paperhanger
Painter
Perfumer
Piano-forte maker
Photographic artist
Plumber
Plasterer
Policeman
Polisher, French
Porter, at Pickford's
Do., Chaplin's
Postman
Publican
Railway-engineer
Railway-porter
Railway-guard
Railway-policeman
Railway-engine-fitter
Railway-platelayer
Railway-labourer
Railway-foreman
Road-maker
Sailor
Saw-mill man
Sawyer
Servant
Shoemaker
Schoolmaster
Shopman
Smith, black
Smith, house
Soldier
Stone-sawyer
Stoker
Stonemason
Stay-maker

Supervisor of Inland Revenue	Timekeeper	Wheelwright
Sweep	Tinman	Writer
Tailor	Tinplate-worker	Watchman
Timber-dealer	Turncock	Undertaker
Ticket-collector	Waiter (inn)	Upholsterer
	Wine-cooper	Vandriver

While speaking of our houses, I mentioned that there were some with more than ten rooms. These were, for the most part, public-houses and gin-shops. Touching these public-houses and gin-shops I have, however, something to say. Many persons will immediately connect with their names every thing that is horrible and wicked, and to some of them these associations do most fully belong. No one is more conscious than I am of the accursed evils that hang about many of those dens of utter iniquity, and no one is more conscious than I am of the curse one unscrupulous and greedy landlord will often bring upon a whole neighbourhood. But there are numbers of public-houses and gin-palaces in our quiet streets which are free from all these evils. They are, in fact, the cellars of the neighbourhood. Few of our smaller houses had any cellars at all; in house-hunting I once went into nearly twenty eight-roomed houses before I found one where a dozen of wine or a barrel of beer could have been properly stowed away; but the people all have their wine,

spirits, and beer, from the public-house at the corner, sending for it just as they require it. I lived once for some considerable time near one of these houses, and never once heard one single row in it, or saw one single drunken person coming out of it. I am persuaded that what was taken for liquors consumed on the premises during the year would not have paid the gas-bill for the year; but it was a curious sight to see the streams of customers, fathers of families, mothers of households, maids of all work, and often children, who streamed in just before one o'clock P. M., and about eight in the evening, for the dinner and the supper beer, put down their money on the counter, got their jugs filled, and streamed out again, often without saying one word to the people of the house or to the bar-men; while a little before the same hours the pot-men went around with cans and jugs to supply those who preferred having the beer brought to their own doors, and did not grudge a small extra price. The history of the public-houses of London would be a curious one; it would dispel many popular prejudices, and while it would expose many villains who are fattening on the worst passions of their fellow-creatures, it would bring to light many who are driving as harmless and guiltless a trade as is conducted in the metropolis.

Amidst such a population and in such houses it may be well imagined that there could be no wealth, and but little luxury. The best of us lived in a very quiet though comfortable way; dinner-parties were nearly unknown; our social gatherings being chiefly confined to evening parties and small musical parties. Yet spite of all this we had a great deal of very pleasant social intercourse, more genial and friendly, perhaps, than in those places where dinners *à la Russe*, and grand entertainments overlaid with flunkies, abound. As a rule, amidst our better population, we were very fluctuating in our habits of residence; if any of us succeeded in our trade, calling, or profession, we moved away to better houses and more fashionable situations; and if any of us failed, we moved away into a newer, and, if possible, yet quieter locality, where our altered circumstances were unknown. There are remarkably few centres of attraction in London to fix people to any one locality; and except some particular circumstances arise to influence them, they think remarkably little of moving, under the influence of that restlessness which is thus expressed: "Man never is, but always to be, blessed."

It may sound to many strange to say that

"congregational attachments" form the strongest centres of London suburbs; the habit of going to one place of worship, be it either church or chapel, the attachment to one particular minister, or the connection with the various charities and means of usefulness, which radiate around both church and chapel, will keep people settled for years in one locality; and many are the warm friendships which spring up amidst those who were otherwise perfect strangers, from the mere fact of meeting together often at and in church. The shyness of the British character is, however, manifested here as elsewhere; it is no uncommon thing for persons to live for years in London without knowing the name of their next-door neighbours; and I have known persons occupy portions of the same sitting in church for years, and yet scarcely know each other's names. The changes in a neighbourhood are often very sudden; I have known a full quarter of the best houses in a parish emptied in consequence of the death or departure of a single clergyman; and I have also known nearly as many emptied by the sight of a surveyor or two in the streets, and a rumour that a new railway was about to be driven through the locality. In our own neighbourhood, our church, which was a very large one, had been raised with great diffi-

culty by the labours of an excellent man of whom I shall have to speak elsewhere in this book; and the very difficulties of his position, aided by his own especial character, had drawn around him a host of men and women who, in backing him up warmly, got so attached to him, to the church, and to each other, that when I first joined him in his labours I found myself introduced, as it were, to a large and most united family circle — a family circle which, thank God, still remains wonderfully unbroken under my successor. But while we had a family circle, subject like all other family circles to the changes and chances of this mortal life, we had also a large *surrounding*, which was not held together by this link, and not unfrequently have I known a sixth or eighth of the seats in church, which were let, given up in one year by the holders because they were moving elsewhere.

If, however, we were fluctuating amongst our higher classes, we were doubly so amongst our poor. To find half a dozen houses in a street, in each of which houses about six families resided, suddenly emptied, was no uncommon occurrence; and it was again not uncommon to find an eighth or even a sixth of the scholars of our day-schools as suddenly removed. Any great stagnation in

labour, or any sudden opening in the labour-market in another portion of town, was enough to cause an exodus, and our district visitors were perpetually reporting the departure of old families and the arrival of new ones. I have said that both classes of our population were fluctuating, but in this I was wrong; the upper one was *fluctuating* — when any in it left, they generally left for good; but the under one was *oscillating*, for those of it who left were just as likely to return in one, two, or three months, or perhaps in a year or two. Many a well-known face has suddenly disappeared from school: "Father's got a job at Shadwell," and reappeared as suddenly: "Father's got a job at the station."

Although we had no footmen and no carriages in our parish, yet my congregation contained as many well-educated, intelligent, and pleasant ladies and gentlemen, as any congregation in England; men and women fully capable of holding their own in any position in life; men and women to whom the practical working of life had imparted a greater keenness of mind than easier circumstances would have done. Thackeray speaks well in one of his works of the little-faith which dare not marry till it can drive to church with a pair of horses, and the public press has spoken

abundantly of late of what is supposed to be "*absolutely necessary*" before a couple can or ought to marry; but no one knows better than a suburban clergyman how bravely the battle of life is being fought out by educated men and women who have dared to join themselves together "in holy matrimony," though conscious they may have to live for years in a six-roomed house in a quiet street, and to work hard to keep that house and the couple of simple maids who wait on them. Life insurance is the mainstay of their provision for the future, and self-denial for each other and the children's sake is the rule of their existence; and many and many a bright, happy home do I know of under such circumstances. Yet how hard many of these men work! From half-past seven to nine in the morning they are streaming off to their places of business; and from half-past six till nine at night they are returning home. Sunday is their one rest-day, the one day on which they repose and dine at home: for on all other days they snatch a hasty dinner at the various taverns and eating-houses in town, merely taking breakfast and supper under their own roofs. Sunday also is often the only day, while the little ones are young, on which they see much of their children. "Through the

winter," said one good fellow to me, "I kiss my children before they are out of bed in the morning, and after they are in bed at night; but, from Monday morning to Saturday night, I never once see them dressed. But on Sunday I go to church in the morning; and then how I do enjoy that afternoon stroll with the little ones, if the day is fine, or that chat round the fire, if the day is cold or stormy! It pays me for working all the week to keep them." Of course, I do not mean to say that such men are free from anxiety as to the fate of these little ones, should any thing happen to them; yet I do say that their conduct is nobility itself to the life of those fashionable, well-dressed gentlemen who pervade town life — men whose *summum bonum* was expressed to me by one of themselves, a devout scorner of matrimony, to be,—"a few hundreds a year, a good club, a comfortable lodging, and a latch-key." Of all classes in our modern society, this class is the most unwholesome in its own moral being, and the most dangerous to the Commonwealth.

"Why do you work so hard, my dear fellow?" said I, to a friend; "you are over-doing it; look at Smith, he takes it more easily." "Ah, but he has a backbone of two or three thousand in a

marriage settlement, and I have not, so I must pull on."

If, however, these noble men work hard, their good ladies are not a whit behind. "Mamma" is the mainspring of the establishment — housekeeper, storekeeper, head nurse in sickness, governess, and lady of the house; the calls upon her are multifarious, and she has little spare time for gossip or for visits. If you dine with her, you may be sure she has no need to ask what the dishes are; if you sleep at her house, you may see in a moment that the linen would not have been so clean, or the room so well arranged, had it been superintended only by a housemaid. Her children go naturally to her for help in all predicaments; and her husband, after he has placed the housekeeping money in her hand, never asks how it has been spent, but quietly takes all he receives and all he sees for granted. Yet how perfectly the lady she is at the head of her table!—how beautifully she often touches the piano!—how well she talks! as if she had nothing else to do but to practise music and to read the current literature of the day. There is a marvellous top-current of ostentatious show of envious vying with each other, of restless, discontented extravagance, in our society at the present

day; but, thank God, there is a noble undercurrent of self-denial, of quiet management, of bold grappling with the duties of life, which, even amongst our upper ten thousand, and our next hundred of thousands, keeps the stream of society from utter corruption, and salts it with an honest and invigorating power; and no one sees more of this deep, quiet, and refreshing stream, than the clergyman of a suburban parish. It does one's heart good to bear witness to this truth; it warms one's heart to think of many of these noble men and noble women who are thus living, and whom one knows and values.

It must not be supposed, however, that we had no poverty, ignorance, or vice, in our suburban parish: we had indeed far too great an abundance of all these evils. I may be blamed for classing poverty, ignorance, and vice together, for "poverty is no crime, and need be no disgrace;" but I am not speaking of that poverty which has come by the visitation of God, but of that squalid poverty which is the offspring of ignorance and vice, and both feeds and is fed by them. We had none of the more glittering forms of vice amongst us; evil did not wear the same artful and attractive masks that it wears on the purlieus of great wealth and high civilization; we were all but exempt,

thank God, from those extremely neat, prettily kept, but most suspicious little establishments, about which single broughams constantly hover, and which flourish in some of our suburbs; and we had no open houses of ill-fame; but we had plenty of open drunkenness, blasphemy, and ill-living—the fruit, in a great degree, of brutal ignorance and stolid indifference. Some of the smaller houses in our back streets had been built as residences for the upper and more intelligent workmen of a large railway factory, for men who were gaining good wages in a regular employment, and whose very position exercised a wholesome restraint upon them; but, after a while, these works were moved into the country, and the demand for such houses entirely ceased. For a long time many of the landlords strove to keep up the look of quiet respectability; but as, just at that very time, by the making of New Oxford street, one of the great displacements of population, so common of late in London, was taking place, the needier ones began to consent to let their houses out "in single rooms" to families; and when the barrier was once broken down, the flood soon swept over the land, and the most respectable landlords were compelled to follow suit. As I have elsewhere pointed out some of

the consequences of this overcrowding, I will not dwell on it here; but the whole character of one side of our parish was immediately changed. We had, in fact, three strata, as distinct as possible, and a practised eye could see in a moment where the one began and the other ended; though, of course, there were spots where a lower stratum cropped up into a higher, and produced a marked irregularity. No stranger could tell what scenes of want and misery were constantly enacted in those back streets; but the swarms of half-ragged children might warn him that those new-looking, tidy houses were only white outside, and that within he might expect to find human beings crowded more closely together than the inhabitants of a Hottentot kraal. No stranger, again, can tell the difference that exists between the workmen in regular, steady employ, and the workmen dependent on job or task work. The latter often make for a time by far the most money; but the very uncertainty of their incomes, and the very nature of their circumstances, foster in them a strange recklessness of living, which does not prevail amongst those who have regular places. They are all, as a rule, in debt; if they do well in a summer, they pay off their scores at the shops and public-houses, and so get a vested right

to trust next winter; but if they do badly in the summer, they flit to some new locality, where, being unknown, they hope to get new credit. "Extremes meet," we are told; and it would be a very curious matter to compare the books of those tradesmen who have to do with the ultra-fashionable and the ultra-poor of our metropolis. I have often noticed in these two extremes exactly the same recklessness of living, the same looking on the power of getting into debt as so much actual income, the same utter shamelessness of self-indulgence, and utter carelessness of public opinion and of the morrow, and know well that the extremes of St. James's and St. Giles's are not so far apart in character and bent of disposition as some would think.

Let me guard, however, against the idea that our labouring poor are all indifferent about the question of debt; the truer and better portion of them have a far greater hatred and dread of debt than prevails amongst those of higher station, and would often rather starve than owe.

Amidst such a mass of labouring people we often had, of course, a great amount of want; long-protracted sickness would reduce the most careful and provident, and want of work and sickness would terribly straiten the reckless and the very

poor. I could always calculate that a fortnight's severe frost would put several hundred starving families on my hands. These, however, were not our difficult cases; accustomed as they were to short commons, utterly unaccustomed as they were to the refinements of life, their *necessaries* were very few: and they were like vessels stranded near the mouth of a harbour,—if you could only keep them up till next tide, they would float again, and be as comfortable as ever. Our difficulties lay in the cases of those "who had known better days," and who had been utterly reduced. What would have been luxuries of life to the other class, were necessaries to them, and no means within our reach would place them even where their servants, perhaps, had once stood. No one can guess the frightful struggle that such persons often have to undergo, and they *suffer in silence;* they do not clamour in the streets; they starve and die in the shade. "Ah, dear Sir, the children are dining now on the silver mugs given them at their christenings; they were the last things we parted with, and we have been living on them for some days. When they are gone, Heaven help us!" Thus spake to me the dear lady of a professional man, whom long illness and adverse circumstances had driven to a hiding-place in one of our quiet streets.

"Do you know, Sir, I think that a woman is dying of starvation in one of the houses opposite?" said a member of my congregation to me one day. "No; in which house?" "In No. —." "I'll call and inquire at once." The house opposite was a neat, comfortable, eight-roomed house, with a neat garden in front, a bell and knocker, a box for letters, and all other signs of quiet respectability. I knew it was inhabited by a widow, who let lodgings. I rapped at the door: "Is there a poor lady here in great distress?" "Indeed there is, Sir; she is absolutely starving; every thing she has is gone; she owes me no end for rent, but I had not the heart to turn her out." I went upstairs and knocked at the door, and, when bidden, walked in. The room was entirely bare; not one scrap of furniture was in it,—all had been pawned. On a bed on the floor, in a corner of the room, lay a female covered only by a blanket and two or three old shawls. By her side cowered a once fine-looking young man, whose face and dress spake alike of extreme poverty. Drawing near to the bed, I saw a countenance from which even starvation had been unable to efface an elegance of expression which spake of a high education and of far brighter days. "My dear Madam, this is a new state to you; you are not used to such ex-

tremities?" "Alas! no, Sir," said a feeble voice; "I have always lived in comfort and ease. I married young, and my husband held good public appointments, which brought him in more than £800 a year. He would always live up to his income, and I never really knew till lately what he had. In a moment of sad infatuation he committed himself terribly; he was dismissed from all his posts; he has deserted me and fled the country, and has left me and my son unprovided for. We cannot dig, to beg we are ashamed; we have sought to hide ourselves in this quiet street, and are starving here." In this case I found that the son had had a good education, and was willing to work; a little aid reclaimed a decent suit from the pawnshop, and a kind friend on my recommendation tried him as a clerk; in a short time he and his mother were living in tolerable comfort. Another time I was told that scarlet fever had broken out in a small shop in a back street. I called at the shop, and, walking in, was met by an elegant and ladylike person, dressed with the homeliest simplicity, who asked me my pleasure. I told her why I had called, and she asked me to walk up-stairs. I did so, and found in one room six dear little children in various stages of that dreadful malady. After remaining with them some time, I walked down-

stairs, and began conversing with the mother. Her story was soon told. Her husband had been in business, and was doing well, but had been connected rather too closely with a great house. The leviathan had fallen with a crash that had astonished the commercial world, and in its fall had dragged down the smaller house, and sent the poor merchant adrift, with his whole £15,000 of capital irretrievably gone. The poor sufferers were looking out for better days, and while the husband was doing what he could as commission agent, his gentle lady was bravely fighting her share of the battle in a small "sweet-shop," but with no means of providing for her children the comforts requisite for such an illness. On another occasion, my servant told me that two ladies wished to speak to me, and in were ushered two most elegant women, dressed in the deepest black. Some conversation ensued between us, and led eventually to my asking who they were, and what were their means of subsistence. They were the widow and eldest daughter of a very eminent artist, who had died suddenly, without having made any provision for his family, and their only means of subsistence lay in colouring the maps and plans which are occasionally given away by the cheap weekly press of London,—a labour at which, it may be

easily conceived, they gained but a miserable and most precarious subsistence. To such persons, however, I must add a long list of ladies who have once been governesses, and who from age or infirmity have been compelled to abandon their occupation. Brought up often in the lap of luxury, compelled, perhaps, by some most sudden reverse to seek their bread by tuition, generally but very poorly paid, yet obliged to dress as ladies, and subject to many necessary expenses, they are often quite unable to lay by any thing against a dark day; and far too often their little savings are expended on the support of an aged father or mother, the education of younger brothers and sisters, or are swept away by some fraudulent banking-scheme, or other well-organized swindle in which they have invested, tempted by the seeming security and high rate of interest. Could the wealthy and beneficent know what every town clergyman knows of such cases, they would oftener place funds in the hands of those who are willing to aid, and who do constantly meet with persons in such situations. I have often known cases where a hundred, fifty, or even twenty pounds, would have saved a whole family from ruin, but I have not known where to apply for it,—and while some wretched begging-letter impostor, living, perhaps, a life of the most wan-

ton profligacy, has been able to raise hundreds by sheer lying and fraud, I have been obliged to stand by and see ruin seize on most worthy persons, without being able to avert it. In reference to governesses, did all the wealthy of this land know what we clergy often hear of the sufferings and deprivations under which the ladies to whom for years they have committed that highest of all trusts—the education of their children—are compelled to undergo, they would take more present care of their interests than they now generally do, and they would do far more to aid such excellent institutions as the Governesses' Benevolent Society and the National Benevolent Institution. Of the Governesses' Benevolent Society, an abstract of whose objects I attach to this page,* I can speak most highly from personal acquaintance

* The objects of this Society are all in operation.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE to Governesses in distress, afforded privately and delicately through the Ladies' Committee.

ANNUITY FUND.—Elective annuities to aged governesses, secured on invested capital, and thus independent of the prosperity of the Institution.

The Hon. Mrs. Ashley has most kindly opened a fund to raise all the Society's annuities to £25. Any donations which may be kindly given, may be addressed "The Hon. Mrs. Ashley, to the care of the Secretary."

PROVIDENT FUND.—Provident annuities purchased by ladies in any way connected with Education, upon Government security,

with its working; and feel strongly assured that, could the wealthy and benevolent but see the list of cases which are often submitted to the Board at one Meeting, the subscription-list would very quickly be doubled.

It may be asked, how we managed to meet the more ordinary cases of distress which we encountered; but this question must be answered under another head. Meanwhile, I can hardly forbear from adding a word for those excellent institutions, the Infant Orphan Asylum, Wanstead; the London Orphan Asylum, Clapton; the St. Anne's School, Brixton; and the Orphan Asylum, Ham Common; and others of a kindred nature, which afford a good shelter and a sound education to the children of so many who "have known better days," and who have been cut off by an untimely death, or reduced by unforeseen circumstances. Many a widow's heart is gladdened by the thought that her dear little boy or girl is safely provided

agreeably to the Act of Parliament. This branch includes a Savings' Bank.

A HOME for Governesses during the intervals between their engagements.

A SYSTEM OF REGISTRATION, entirely free of expense.

AN ASYLUM FOR THE AGED.

C. W. KLUGH, *Secretary.*

32 *Sackville street.*

for during their most helpless years; and many an orphan is snatched from cruel neglect, and both provided for a time with a happy home, and also trained to labour in some honest calling in after-life. Yet all these institutions suffer from the great difficulty of knowing what to do with their pupils when the Home can retain them no longer. Next to the kindness of subscribing to train these orphans, comes the kindness of giving them a helping hand when they enter upon public life, and affording them a good opening for their career. Some persons take great pains to aid the young pupils in this respect. The head of a gigantic city firm told me, a short time ago, that he had not one man in his employ who had not been trained at one of these Orphan Asylums; and that many a now prosperous man had passed "into business on his own account" from his establishment. This was real kindness to the orphan and the fatherless. It has, however, struck me most forcibly, that a great want exists, and a great field of usefulness on this very point is still unoccupied. Our colonies are crying out for women; and these institutions are sending out yearly into the world numbers of fine, well-trained, sensible young women, many of whom are sadly friendless, and have to face life as a

scene of deep and bitter struggles. The very blessings and the kindness of the Asylums make them feel more keenly the friendlessness of their after-life. Suppose that some institution were formed which took such of these orphans as were willing to emigrate when they were compelled to leave the "old Home," which they are generally forced to do at the age of fourteen or fifteen, and gave them, in addition to their former excellent education, a sound and thorough domestic training, and then sent them abroad, keeping up an *esprit de corps* amongst them, and trying to preserve communications with them when in foreign lands; and we should bring down a blessing on us from the colonies to which we had done so great a kindness. I would have these girls trained to bake, to milk, to cook, to brew, to wash, to iron, and yet keep them up to the mark as to their old studies; make them, in fact, in domestic matters, old-fashioned English housewives, such as may still be occasionally found amongst us, and yet make them partakers of the social and intellectual progress of the day. Fancy the joy of a squatter in Australia or New Zealand, if he could get such a girl to aid his wife; and fancy the joy of a young squatter if, after some years' experience abroad, he got such a woman as

a true helpmate. My idea may seem visionary; but were I rich, I would begin to try the experiment to-morrow; and perhaps some experienced philanthropist may yet reduce this crude idea to a practical form.

But, to return to our Suburban Parish. We had many and interesting institutions which may well form the subject of another chapter. I speak of Church institutions, though, of course, the Church did not occupy all the ground; we had Nonconformity in some few of its varied forms, and yet we had more than enough left for us to do. Our streets were what are generally called "quiet streets," that is to say, very few carriages and cabs passed up and down them, and there was no busy throng of passers-by ever treading our pavement. But as for quiet! it is a marvel to me how the term "quiet" ever got applied to any, and especially to any suburban, London street, when the fact is known that costermongers reign there triumphant. Of the blessings of such "quiet" I came in for a double share, for the front of my house looked upon one street, and the back on another; and often did I long for "a lodge in some vast wilderness" for a time, if only to escape from their cries, while at least I composed my sermons. I am not bold enough to

grapple with the many attacks made of late on sermon-writers and on preachers; but I am often amused at those who seem to think that sermon-writing and preaching is a clergyman's hardest work, while, in many a large parish, it is in reality his lightest toil; and yet it is a task which, of all others, requires quiet preparation. But how is that quiet preparation to be gained, when one perpetual stream of interruptions presses upon us? I have often sat down with locked door to write or read, but as I could not tell my servant to say, "Not at home," when I was at home, almost as surely as I got well into my subject some interruption came. It was in vain my poor servant pleaded that "master was very much engaged, and could not be seen;" there are people who will not take excuses. "I want to speak to him for one moment;" one moment with such people always meaning twenty minutes;—"I cannot call again, do ask him to see me," &c., &c. This all went on while I was sitting with only the thin walls of a small London house between me and my tormentor; and, at last, I was often obliged, in order to get rid of him or her, to have an interview. It would amuse many, could I tell them of all the tricks played by clergymen in London to obtain quiet while preparing for the

pulpit. One good man invariably locks himself in his vestry, but then he is away from his books; and another goes regularly to the British Museum; but I was most pleased with the device of an eminent canon, the vicar of an immense London parish, who told me that, at last, he had been driven to take a lodging, and remove much of his library there; and to that lodging he retired to write, having let only one person, his eldest daughter, into the secret of his whereabout, in order that, if positively necessary, she might know where to find him.*

But the worst interruptions were often from the streets. Possessing as I do a natural distaste for controversial sermons, I was yet, on one occasion, driven distinctly to a kind of semi-controversial course; during which, on a certain Saturday, after a more than usual hard week's work (death was terribly rife amongst us at that moment), I sat down to write the most critical and difficult sermon of the series. With a heated brain, and a mind full of the many painful scenes I had for

* A gentleman writing to me since the first edition was published says: "You may feel some interest in knowing, as confirming one of your statements, that the late Mr. ——" (an eminent West-end preacher) "was accustomed to write his sermons at his sister's at Hornsey, to get away from the noise and constant interruption of London."

days been witnessing, I both at once needed quiet, and was at the same time more than usually sensitive to noise.

But the cries! From before, from behind, they rose with terrible clearness in the air, and racked my head with a succession of most conflicting and most discordant sounds. Snatching up a piece of paper, I began to jot down each one as it struck upon my ears. I have now that paper by me, and should like to print it; but, remembering that "truth is stranger than fiction," dare not do so, as I should be most certainly deemed an exaggerator by those who have never lived in "a quiet street."

These costermongers are one of our social difficulties. On the one hand, they dispose, in a most marvellous manner, of much produce, which would otherwise glut the already existing London markets, and they bring many necessaries to people's own doors, in parts of town where no open market exists, thus keeping down prices to a fair average level; and, on the other hand, they enter into competition, and that to a most dangerous extent, with rate-paying, tax-paying shopkeepers. I must not, however, be tempted, at the end of this long chapter, into a disquisition on this subject, but can only say that an eminent market

gardener in the suburbs has often assured me that his fruit and vegetables never pay him so well as when they come within reach of the costermonger's prices, and that such articles as the costermongers can sell "will buy the horse, while choicer and dearer articles are buying the saddle." The only chance I see of making our streets really quiet is to open markets in the various quarters of London where men of the costermonger class could readily procure stalls, and which they could supply by purchases made at the great central markets. By this means a wholesome competition might be opened with the shops, a wholesome provision be made for the wants of our population, and a wholesome quiet be restored to our streets. One thing is quite certain—the existing markets of London are a disgrace to London. Would that their proprietors could be compelled to visit, and to imitate, the "Halles Centrales" of Paris!

CHAPTER II.

A SUBURBAN PARISH.

OUR INSTITUTIONS.

How did our Institutions begin? Were they venerable for age, or vigorous in youth? How could they be aged, when out of more than 1,300 houses not above three or four were twenty years old, and when a valued friend of mine is still living who once farmed a large portion of our parish? Our oldest Institution did not date back beyond 1847, when a clergyman, of whom I will speak more largely in a future chapter, was appointed to our "newly-constituted district." Till then we had belonged to a parish with a population greater than that of an Australian province, with its separate Government, double Legislative Assembly, and Parliament. This clergyman had begun with a small Sunday-school—had then got on to National, Infant, and Sunday schools, in a building used also for a temporary church, and

at last had achieved a church itself. I will begin now with our

CHURCH.

This was a large and commodious building, erected after heavy struggles, which will be spoken of elsewhere. It seated more than 1,500 persons, and was generally quite full. We had in it none of those abominable boxes which so commonly prevail, but every seat was open, and every seat was exactly alike. I dare not enter on the subject of boxes, for it is one which always excites me; but this I will say, that no one fungus has done greater mischief to this land, and greater mischief to the Church of England, than the up-growth of private boxes in churches.* How hideously they deform most of our churches,

* It will be seen that the object of our author's most violent aversion is not the few arrangements common in American, as well as English, churches; but the system of *proprietary* seats in the house of worship, under which a private person feels himself as completely the owner of his few square feet of the church floor as he does of his city building-lot, and as little bound to consult the general taste and convenience in the one case as in the other. Under this system, the "Squire's pew," with its ostentation of luxury and its magnificent seclusion of high curtains, has grown, in some English country churches, to be the rival, in conspicuousness, of the pulpit and of the chancel; and, in fact, to the horror and grief of Ecclesiologists, has sometimes lodged itself, for greater dignity, in the very chancel itself.—Ed.

every one with the smallest particle of taste is fully aware; but I well remember my amusement on asking a little child one Sunday where she had been to: "I have been to surch; I have been in a cupboard in surch with Aunt Barby." The child's instinct had hit on the right name for the monstrosity in which she had been hidden for a while, in order to gain that "*desirable privacy*" which some people deem so essential to "*public worship.*" But enough of this; the box system is doomed—however long, with the fatal vitality of all well-rooted evils, it may linger amongst us.

I have said all our seats were open—would I could add all were free, but this was not the case. While we had upwards of 600 sittings, many of them in the best places for seeing and hearing, entirely free, the rest were necessarily let—for the church was without endowment of any kind; the stipend of the incumbent and the whole expenses of carrying on the service were dependent alone on the pew-rents and voluntary contributions. No one who has had to work a large parish under such circumstances, ever afterwards despises the backbone of an endowment; for however liberal people are in reference to all other matters, there are thousands who entirely reverse the Scripture maxim in reference to clergymen, "the workman

is worthy of his hire," and expect the parson both to live on nothing, and to thrive on his living. In many of our towns the clergymen of the Church of England are as entirely dependent on voluntary contributions and on pew-rents as any Nonconformist minister can be; only ours is a mixed system; and vague ideas—myths I would rather call them—float in most minds as to the enormous wealth of the Established Church. In consequence of these myths, many persons, who would never defraud their doctor or their lawyer, or keep any thing back from their baker, butcher, or grocer, will allow their clergyman to struggle on utterly without aid, and are most indignant if called upon to pay pew-rents, or to contribute to the expenses of the service. Yet their eyes are ever open to watch the parson's every movement; the services must be conducted with the greatest exactness; his sermons must be models of composition, stores of thought, and sledge-hammers in personal application; the church must be clean, warm, well lighted; the attendants must be civil and attentive; but the question of how all this is to be supported never once enters their heads. In many of the fashionable parts of town, ladies and gentlemen of high rank will reluctantly pay pew-rents themselves, but will cram their ser-

vants into the free seats, never dreaming of paying pew-rents for them, or of sending a donation towards the expenses of the church;—thus not only driving away the poor, for whom the free seats were intended, but also leaving the clergyman and his churchwardens to meet their heavy responsibilities as best they may; and in other parts of town, respectable people, whose smart dresses testify that they have at least ample means for procuring "purple and fine linen," and who are conscious that they pay no tithes and no rates, will either crowd into the free seats, or come in late to service in hopes of finding some of the best seats empty, and of being able to occupy them without making any payment. I am told by many clergymen in the more fashionable parts of London, that one can scarcely credit how little aid they get towards all their parochial institutions and their church expenses from numbers of persons who come to town for the season, occupying the best houses in the parish, expecting to find all luxuries prepared to their hand, and to have every want ministered to, but never dreaming of what is being done or ought to be done for the population who minister to these wants, and who do *not leave town at the end of the season*. I know pew-rents are a great evil, and most gladly

would I see the true remedy substituted for them; but we are a nation of prejudices, and I dare scarcely breathe the name "offertory," for fear of being at once set down as a "Romanist, Puseyite, or Latitudinarian at least;" and yet I am perfectly persuaded that, had no party cries branded this institution amongst us, till few dare touch it, its general adoption would in a short time do away with the necessity of pew-rents, and often leave a handsome surplus to take the place of charity sermons.

In our church we had not the offertory, but we had about thirteen charity sermons a year, and, towards the end of my incumbency, boxes held at the door after every service. The more we asked of the people the more they gave, and yet we had not one rich man amongst us—not one to whom a sovereign was not a real object, and but very few to whom a shilling was not a shilling. Most of our congregation had also uncertain incomes, the fruit merely of their own industry and talents, and not the proceeds of investments. These incomes were, therefore, to a great degree necessarily precarious, and it was difficult for their holders to put down their names for fixed annual subscriptions; while, at the same time, they were most anxious to act up to the Scripture

motto, and to give according as God had prospered them. To such persons our collections and our boxes afforded the very opportunity they desired; and when on one occasion the boxes were not held, several working-people stopped to ask why they were deprived of the privilege of giving. Since my time, this institution has come into real working; the collections after sermons have not diminished one whit; and yet £240 (chiefly in coppers) has in one year been dropped into the boxes. The money dropped in for general purposes was applied to certain appointed objects, but money dropped in for any particular object was carefully devoted to that purpose. The quality of a collection depends not on the actual amounts given, but on the proportion of those amounts to the income of the people present, and the proportion of coins to the members of the congregation; and I was once highly delighted, knowing how many poor persons and servants attended our church, to find five pounds' worth of threepenny and fourpenny pieces in the plate at one collection; and I could not help thinking what an enormous sum would be collected at many a West-end church in the season, if each worshipper present gave as much *in proportion to his income* as these poor persons had given *in proportion to theirs*. To some of you,

good readers, the idea of self-denial as connected with the giving of a threepenny or fourpenny piece may seem incomprehensible and ridiculous; but if you would take the proportion that sum bears to the income of a labouring man with a large family, or a maid-of-all-work in a small family, and compare it with your own gifts, it might occasion in your heart a pang of penitential shame.

Next to our church in importance came our

NATIONAL, INFANT, AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

None but those who have bought experience by personal sacrifices can tell how great is the struggle entailed upon managers of schools to keep these institutions flourishing. People often have an idea that the children's pence will pay the expenses, but that idea is a fallacious one. The larger the school, the nearer it draws towards being self-supporting; but in almost every locality the gap between the "pence" and the expenditure is a very serious one. The Government system has fostered a far more expensive style of education than would ever have been otherwise dreamt of (and I do not find fault with this,—the tone of general education is not one whit higher than it ought to be for the welfare of the people), but we

are all in extreme fear and trembling as to the working of the new system—a system which must, to some of us, prove a terrible blow.*

Some country persons are very indignant if asked to contribute any thing to town schools or town churches; and yet every one who has managed a town school becomes very conscious of the present strange townward tendencies of country folks. I was once talking with a school

* Sundry allusions, in these pages, to the "National School" system, may require explanation to American readers.

In the absence of any general provision for the education of the whole people, the main reliance is on the zeal or emulation of religious sects, encouraged and supplemented by subsidies from the Government.

The state looks to each denomination to make an effort to educate its own children, and offers in aid of each school, thus organized, a sum of money proportioned to the whole amount expended on the school. This Government aid, however, is given on condition that the schools shall be always open to the visitation and examination of certain officers, who, under the name of "Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools," make periodical visits to the aided schools, and who may require any school to conform to certain regulations established for the general benefit.

In large communities the activity and competition of various sects will often secure a wide variety, and sometimes an adequate supply of National Schools; but through the country generally, the organization and management of such schools will of course fall mainly into the hands of those who are attached to the Established Church; so that a care for the means of secular education becomes one of the most serious responsibilities of the faithful ministry of a parish.

inspector on this very point, and asked him just to put the question to each child in the first three or four classes, "Where were you born?" and before he had finished his queries we had the names of two-thirds of the counties of England on our list. We rarely had less than 600 names on the books of the day-schools at once, and often many more; and that without including the ragged-schools. But if I can speak with pleasure of our day-schools, I can speak most warmly of our Sunday-schools. There are thousands who connect with the name of a Sunday-school teacher the idea of a weak young man, or an excitable, sensationable young lady; but no idea can be more false. The list of those engaged in Sunday-school work, in connection with the Church of England, would indeed be a grand one if it could be printed. It would be headed by many of the noblest of the land; and of my own personal knowledge I could put down the names of a judge, one of our most acute and excellent lawyers, who now, regularly,

The whole method is justly censured for its inadequacy and lack of economy; but a far more serious charge against it is its *sectarian* character. It erects the prevailing schisms which divide the Christian people of England into a great public interest, under the patronage of the nation, and provides for the training up of successive generations from their childhood in habits of religious division and dissension.—ED.

after the toils of the week, occupies his place in Sunday-school—of another lawyer, whose name is in every one's mouth as one of the leading advocates of the day, who has also for years taught in a Sunday-school—of a dear old baronet, lately dead, who could not bear to "miss his class;" and of another dear old baronet, one of the very best-informed men of his day, who, at nearly eighty years of age, takes the first class in his village school every Sunday, morning and evening, and has done so for many years, even when he was a well-known and distinguished Member of Parliament. Our boys' Sunday-school was for many years superintended by one solicitor, and is now superintended by another, while a third has for a long time managed most admirably a kind of branch school; and I have had amongst my Sunday-school teachers an eminent and successful surgeon, a most eminent engraver, a well-known barrister, two or three artists, several articled clerks in law-offices, several Bank of England and railway clerks, and others of a like position. Of my lady teachers I could speak as highly, but of both I may say, that I have often most thankfully wondered at the self-denying courage which has enabled those whose heads have been chained to the desk throughout the whole day for week after

week, or who have laboured with their hands from six o'clock on Monday morning to six o'clock on Saturday night, to give up their one day of rest to the work of Sunday teaching, to be at school from nine till eleven in the morning, and from three to five in the afternoon.

We had various Sunday-schools—a regular boys', girls', and infant school in the National Schoolroom; a Sunday-school under an enclosed railway-arch; two Ragged-schools, and a school conducted in a private house for the children of persons in an upper class, who were anxious to have their young ones well and carefully instructed on religious subjects. Of course, one's own time for Sunday-school work was but small, but it did one's heart good to see so noble a band of true-hearted brethren and sisters labouring in the Lord's name. But there is one subject connected with our Sunday-schools which I must not pass over, and that was our Sunday-school treat. This was the event of the year. On a certain day, generally in June, we borrowed from two kind firms in the neighbourhood a number of their huge vans, and then, having taken a field for the day in some neighbouring village, drove off to enjoy ourselves. The wild joy of the children; how they cheered, how they sang, how they waved

their flags, how excited they got with all country scenes and country sounds and smells, how they revelled in the green lanes and grassy meadows, would fill up many a page, and make a subject worthy of a poem; but I have often regretted that schools on such occasions are driven to hire fields belonging to some public-house or some public suburban place of amusement. If noblemen and gentlemen, who have places near London, only knew what intense gratification they would confer both on teachers and pupils by allowing them the run of their parks for a day, they would with pleasure bestow the privilege, and the excellent Secretary of the Sunday-school Institute, Ludgate-hill, would soon find them a school or schools to take advantage of their kindness; and I will answer for it that they would be utterly astonished at the small amount of injury done to their places, while I cannot attempt to describe the immense amount of pleasure which would be given. On two occasions dear and valued friends of mine own gave us this privilege; and one, a beloved relative, furnished us also with fresh milk for the children. Nothing, seemingly, could exceed the delight of the young ones when, after a good game in the fields and a roll in the hay, which happened to be in a state in which they could not injure it, they

were allowed, in regular order as marshalled by their teachers, to walk through the private gardens and the principal rooms of the mansion. None but town children could have gazed at the flowers and the trees as they gazed, and have asked such questions as they asked; but when the new milk came from the dairy, their astonishment at its quality knew no bounds. They had never seen, never tasted, any thing like it, and one pretty little lass came up to me with her mug, and holding it before me said, with an inquiring look of deepest earnestness, "My! teacher, is this milk?"

Pardon me if I wander from my subject for a moment. It is almost impossible for country people to understand a Londoner's love for flowers, and the exceeding treat which is afforded to them by such places as Kew Gardens, Hampton Court, the Crystal Palace Gardens, &c. I noticed that last year some economical Members of Parliament grumbled at the expense incurred in keeping up Kew Gardens; but they would never grumble again if they could only have seen the pleasure afforded to my Ragged-school boys, when we took them down there for a holiday. One day I was in one of the hot-houses at Kew, and noticed a man, evidently a plain working-man, pointing out to his little girl the beauties of the flowers. I stood

beside him, and noticed particularly that he never once spoke of colour, but always pointed to the shape. Anxious to see whether this arose from colour-blindness or not, I at last accosted him: "Friend, why do you always point out the shape of the flower to your child? why not point out the exquisite colours?" "Did I only point out the shape, Sir? I didn't know it; but I'm a wood-carver, and that made me do it, perhaps. I has always to think of shape."

Our Ragged-school will form the worthy subject of a separate chapter, so I will pass on to our railway-arches.*

The first of these was used as a public reading-room and library; and by the liberality of a single gentleman, one who ever willingly aided us in every work, the two open sides were bricked up, good windows were put in, the floor was levelled and boarded, gas was laid on, a fair library was provided, newspapers were ordered, and the Insti-

* A word, unhappily, not known to our American vocabulary. It is characteristic of the public care for human life that prevails in England, that it is not permitted that railroads intersect common highways at the same level. Consequently, the railroads commonly enter a city on lofty viaducts of masonry, under which the ordinary travel and traffic of the place may pass, without danger of collision. The broad arches which sustain the railroad are easily made useful for storage and other like purposes. —Ed.

tution was opened to all who would avail themselves of it at 1*s.* 6*d.* a quarter subscription, or 1*d.* for a single admission. Our arch answered so well, that a second was soon needed; and, chiefly with the profits cleared by a successful excursion train, was fitted up for a lecture or meeting room, and for other kindred purposes. This idea, when worked out, answered so well, that a third arch was soon secured and fitted up. This arch was ever at work. It answered as a temporary Ragged-school for girls all the day, and four nights a week as a night-school also for girls; on the other two nights Bible-classes were held there, one by a city missionary, one in connection with a Sunday-school; on Sundays it was used, both morning and afternoon, for a Sunday-school, and in the evening for another Bible-class. The place was never empty, save at night, and all the work went on merrily, spite of the never-ceasing rumbling of the trains overhead. But one institution connected with this arch I must not omit to mention, and that was our "Children's Sick-Fund." Some of the children of the girls' night-school used to collect any small sums of money that they could, and then, under the direction of a most kind and excellent man, a Committee of eight children used to expend it in little articles of food, which they

cooked very nicely, and afterwards took to various sick persons. They would come to us, the clergy, for a list of those who would value the present, and many a heart did they cheer, and many a good lesson did they learn for themselves in endeavouring to aid others. "Oh, Sir, I was very bad and low last night" (said a poor sufferer to me), "when a knock came at the door, and when I opened it, in came too sweet little lasses with such a nice little pudding, and they said they came from you. It wasn't so much the pudding as their sweet smiles and kind looks as did me good; and I'm all the better for them already." Here I traced the work of two emissaries of our "Children's Sick-Fund."

But in connection with our schools we had also, during the winter months, a series of concerts and lectures for working men. To these the people were admitted *free;* but during my time, I used always to tell the visitors that there were considerable expenses connected with the entertainments, and that while I wished no one to be kept away because he had not a penny to pay for admission, I felt sure that they would aid us if possible. Boxes were held at the door to receive any stray pennies, and the money dropped into them during the course of each series invariably defray-

ed all the expenses. In London, where there are such numbers of rival amusements to attract, it is hard to gain an audience for more staid and sober lectures, and yet there are a very large class who value them much, and who gladly avail themselves of them, but lecturers generally make great mistakes; they take subjects which require much previous study before they can be understood; they give too grave titles, they use too many fine words, and they presume too much on people's knowledge and desire for instruction, and forget alike their ignorance and desire for amusement. There is nothing we want more in the huge suburbs of London than places of recreation and amusement, not dependent on, or connected with, public-houses. Perhaps our most popular evenings were what what we termed "miscellaneous;" that is to say, some gentlemen in the parish read good extracts from amusing and interesting books, some ladies gave us a little music and a few songs, and some young men recited pieces that they had learned by heart. Of course, such entertainments only answered in the winter, but during that time of the year they afforded great pleasure to many a person.

Next to our schools came our District Visiting Society.

"A district visitor," in many person's minds, suggests only the idea of a fussy, good-natured lady, with a bagful of tracts, and with a few soup-tickets at command, who forces herself into all sorts of houses, with or without welcome; takes the lid off the pot to see what there is for dinner, and irritates many by uncalled-for advice and interference. There may be such persons in the world, but I never met them; on the other hand, I have often known a district visitor prove a great blessing to a neighbourhood. Nothing is more oppressive than the terrible isolations of London, and any thing which tends in a kindly way to break up those isolations must have a beneficial effect. We may think it strange that persons living next door to each other in a street should be ignorant of each other's names, but I have often known the ground-floor tenant in a house utterly ignorant of the persons who lived in the first floor, while the first floor had never spoken to the garrets. To have persons, then, who can, in some degree in an official capacity, call at the various houses, offer to lend tracts, to visit in cases of sickness, and otherwise to exercise kindly and friendly offices, on the ground of a common faith, must be most useful. In one London parish I saw a vast deal of the effects of

district visiting; and at the end of one year of my incumbency I was able to say, "That while 25,864 visits have been reported as having been paid by the lady-visitors during 1859, in no one case has any complaint been made to me of incivility or rudeness on the part of those visited; and this fact proves most clearly that those who thus visit are no unwelcome intruders into the poor man's room. Let it not, however, be supposed, in reference to this fact, that this civil reception arises from any expectation of temporal relief on the part of the poor, for it has for some time been my steady aim to disconnect, as much as possible, the giving of relief from the visits of the district visitors, lest they should be regarded rather as polished relieving-officers than as Christian friends and sympathizing neighbours;—and yet since I have taken this step I have no reason to believe that their visits have been less welcome among the people, while I have reason to know that many homes, previously closed against them by those who did not ask for relief, are now eagerly opened for their reception. The incumbent of so large a district as ours has many means of gauging the value of district visitors, and I can safely affirm that during my incumbency some hundreds of cases of sickness and distress,

both mental and bodily, have been brought before me, and have been effectually visited and relieved, of which I should have known nothing but for this agency; and that in numberless cases the suffering and the afflicted have met from their visitors with that deep Christian sympathy and consolation of which they would otherwise have known nothing." An individual knowledge of eleven thousand people is evidently impossible, even if one were endowed with the marvellous powers of a certain usher at one of the London Police-courts, who told me that he never forgot a face he had once steadily looked at; but to know such a mass of people through one's various agencies was something, and there were very few persons in our district of whom I could not learn a good deal at any time if needful. It was essential, however, that there should be a given time when our district visitors could be sure of meeting the incumbent, and, therefore, on every Wednesday morning, following a plan adopted by my excellent predecessor, I used first to meet my brother-clergy and the lay-agents at the vestry, and then, from ten to twelve, held an open levée, at which any person could see me who required to do so, and from twelve to one had a meeting of the district visitors. In this way the people

always knew when they could see us; our list of sick and afflicted who needed visitation was systematically corrected, and a vast mass of varied information was laid before us. Few people know how many things come upon a town clergyman, because of his being the only known public character in the parish. There are hosts of certificates of identity for pensioners, for depositors of money in savings'-banks, in sick-clubs, &c., which require the signature of either a clergyman or a magistrate; but who knows the residence of a magistrate in London? and whom, therefore, can they come to but the clergyman? It would have amused you often, particularly about quarter-day, to see the persons who came to the vestry to have papers signed. Here is a dear old lady, the widow of a Waterloo officer; there is a good dame, the widow of a Waterloo soldier; there a very pretty young widow, whose husband fell in the Crimea, and there the widow of a sailor killed in the Baltic; here an officer who lost his arm in the Sikh campaign, and there a soldier who lost his leg at Chillianwallah. All these come to have their papers signed; some bringing them all ready made up with perfectly military precision, others with every particular wrongly stated, and others with no particulars stated at all. One lady

is very angry because you tell her that she ought not to have signed her paper at home when you have to certify that it has been signed before you; and another bridles up when you ask her, as you are bound to do, whether she is still unmarried. Very few think that you need have any conscience in the matter, or see that your signature is intended as a protection against fraud. In our vestry I have often signed from twenty to thirty such papers in a day. But look at that neat little maiden! She is come from some dear old lady, who is too ill to come out, to ask you to call and sign her papers for her at home; and that other little maiden wants your signature to her savings-bank paper, in order that she may withdraw some of her deposit, for she is going to be married, and wants to get a few things. Again, that young soldier comes forward and makes his salute: will you write and ask his colonel for extension of furlough, for father's very ill; and that poor widow, with many tears, begs you to try and get a furlough for her only son, before he sails for India. That good woman wants you to declare that her husband is ill, in order that he may get his pay from his club in Yorkshire; and that other one wants a certificate of her husband's death, for his club in Devonshire.

"What do you want, my good woman?" "If you please, Sir, our Billy's got lagged for thieving; will you please try and get the magistrate to send him to a reformatory? His father will pay so much a week for him." This implies a letter to some one or other of those most kind-hearted and useful men, the police magistrates of London, and perhaps a letter or two to different reformatories, to know if they will take him in.

"What do you want, my girl?" "If you please, Sir, I want to go to British Columbia; will you fill up my papers?" "What do you want, Madam?" "I want to speak to you in private, Sir, for I am in great trouble." "Walk this way, Madam;" and off we go into the church. If there is one more accursed system than another under the sun, it is the system of forced confession; if there be any one comfort greater than another, it is the power of being able to speak freely to a man of education and experience, under the sense that you may speak to him openly in his official character; and under the sense, also, that what you say will be treated with perfect secrecy. Many and many are the strange stories I could tell of what passed in those quiet walks up and down the centre aisle of our church, with people seeking advice; some connected with the

deepest spiritual struggles of the human heart, some connected with the deepest temporal trials, and some connected with those strange messages to the absent, and promises of forgiveness to the wandering, which appear in the second column of the "Times" advertisement-sheet. We have often seen, for these various purposes, from seventy to a hundred persons in one Wednesday morning; of course, I do not give this number as an average, but only as a sample of what has occurred.

CHAPTER III.

A SUBURBAN PARISH.

OUR INSTITUTIONS.

In a previous page the question suggested itself —How could we aid our suffering and destitute poor? This, of course, was a difficult and delicate question. We were not relieving-officers, and we had not the rates to depend upon; there was the vast machinery of the Poor-law for them to fall back upon, and it was not desirable that private charity should in any way rival it; but then there were the thousand and one cases which the Poor-law did not touch; the thousand and one cases where a little relief in sickness, a little aid in temporal but severe distress, would save a family from an amazing amount of misery, and save them also from the pauperizing habit of running "to the Board" every time they cut their little fingers. Proper pride is a comparative question, and grounds itself upon very different starting-points. A little while ago a poor woman, very rough, very ignorant, living in a very rough

and ignorant neighbourhood, said to me, "I've had a deal of trouble, Sir, for I've brought up ten children, but, thank God, a policeman never laid his fist on one of them yet." Here I saw what was, under her circumstances, the foundation of a proper pride; and the same kind of proper pride comes out in many of our poor, when they thank God "that they never troubled the parish yet;" and was evinced by an old man who said to me a little while ago, "Well, Sir, as long as I can get a bit of cabbage from the garden, boil it and sprinkle it with salt, I can gobble it up, and be as happy as a king without troubling the parish." To help such a person would be a real pleasure to any thoughtful mind, and can be done without in any way destroying their independence of character; but this requires considerable care. Our system of helping such cases was, as a general rule, to give tickets for articles, which tickets bore the names of several tradesmen, any of whom would honour them; and thus we insured the delivery of good articles, for the man who gave the best goods got the most orders. We had also, of course, often to give money, according to the funds placed in our hands from the offertory, but this required double caution. As a rule, the poor came to the vestry on the

Wednesday morning, and there stated their cases and received aid. But though aid was occasionally given through the district visitors, yet, for the reasons stated above, this was rarely done.

We never found any hesitation on the part of those who really deserved aid in coming to the vestry; but the cadgers hated the plan amazingly, for some one of us was sure to know them, and we had always those who could make inquiries at once if it were needed. In severe weather in winter we have often had nearly a hundred applicants in a morning, and I have personally relieved more than sixty persons at one sitting, all of whom I knew to be really deserving of aid. It may seem to many that that this was sad "serving of tables," and so in one sense it was; but, on the other hand, we all found that we thus became personally acquainted with many of our parishioners whom we could never otherwise have known, and that many who had never before spoken to a clergyman learned to feel their friendlessness, and sent the more freely for us in trouble and sickness. In fact, the plan answered so well, that after a time we opened the vestry every morning from nine to ten, and one of the clergy attended regularly, so that our people knew they could at a given time be sure to find a cler-

gyman to speak to, or be sure to know where he was.

One constant call made upon us was for hospital tickets. Whatever aversion to hospitals there may be amongst the country poor, there is none amongst the town poor; they are rather, as a rule, almost too ready to send cases to the hospital; and if you will only think what a blessing it must be for a really sick person to exchange the close, stifling confinement of a room in which a whole family live, for the clean, well-aired, comfortable hospital ward, you will not wonder at this readiness. We had one drawer in our vestry in which we kept hospital tickets, for the supply of which we begged right and left. Often and often have we sent four or five cases away in a morning, chiefly, with us, to the Middlesex and University hospitals; and many have been the expressions of deep thankfulness poured into my ears for the benefits received there. Wealthy persons, in a rich locality, often do not know what to do with their hospital tickets. Let me advise them to send them to the clergyman of their parish, or, if he does not need them, to the officers of the Church of England Scripture-readers' Society, Spring-gardens, Charing-cross; or to the District Visiting Society, and they will

be distributed at once to many a poor parish, and gladden many an aching heart. But, above all things, let me recommend them to subscribe at once to the Convalescent Hospital, Walton-on-Thames, or to the new sea-side Convalescent Hospital, which has its offices at 10 Duke street, St. James's. Words cannot tell the value of such institutions. The hospital must discharge its patients when they are tolerably convalescent, but long before they are well and strong. The poor sufferer returns, weakened by long illness, to close courts and over-crowded rooms, and, in many cases, necessarily soon returns once more to the hospital. The physician's skill is baffled; the work, well done, is quickly undone for want of a continuance of care—the substitution of the cook for the doctor, and, above all, the want of "that pure and bracing air which is as essentially necessary to promote their restoration to health as medicine itself." The infirmary at Margate has done and is doing an immensity of good, but it confines its operations to scrofulous cases; there is ample room, therefore, for kindred institutions, embracing a wider scope of cases. If you could see what every London clergyman constantly sees of the homes to which the poor, emaciated "convalescent" of the hospital returns; if you

only remembered what benefit you derived from your visit to Hastings or Brighton, after that dangerous illness you had some time ago, you would, spite of *the many calls*, find an extra sovereign or two for the convalescent hospitals. Let it not be supposed for a moment that, in these remarks, I am casting any slight on the regular hospitals. They have their province, *acute disease*, and the necessities of that province are so vast they cannot step beyond them. I love, I value those institutions, stamped, as Montalembert says, with that noblest of English mottoes, "Supported by voluntary contributions," and can only say, would to God, these "voluntary contributions" poured in a little more readily than they do!

It is often asserted that our country is split up into sects that hate each other most devoutly, and there is too much truth in this accusation; but in one point there is a marvellous catholicity of feeling, and that lies in the "vested right" which all who are "in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or other adversity," deem that they have in a Church of England parson, and all belonging to him. I never knew religious scruples keep any one away from me who needed help. Primitive Methodists, New Connection Methodists,

Independents, Particular Baptists, General Baptists, Roman Catholics, &c., &c., &c., have all treated me as if it was their "vested right" to speak of me as a mere soul-deluder, a State parson, on ordinary occasions, and as much their "vested right" to look to me for help under every form of trouble. I have often smiled, when looking over my notes, to see how many "Nonconformists" have been to me in a morning for all kinds and varieties of assistance. So be it; who would have it otherwise!

But, some will say, Whence did the funds come to support all this in a poor parish? From annual subscriptions, donations, collections after sermons, and, above all, from the excellent "District Visiting Association," which has its offices in St. Martin's place, Trafalgar square, and which, from its collections amongst the wealthy districts, relieves the necessities of us, the poorer brethren. The aid of this Society was invaluable, for not only did it give us funds to relieve the distressed, but it also gave us the means of encouraging providence and forethought, by making an annual donation to meet, in the shape of interest, the savings of the poor. For this latter purpose we had a "Provident Fund," in which persons could deposit either for a time, or till the end of

the year. One shilling in the pound was allowed as interest for money not withdrawn till Christmas, but all was repaid to the depositors at Christmas, enabling them thus either to provide for the winter, or to accumulate a small sum for investment in a savings-bank. I find that in one year 1,262 depositors placed in our hands £1.090 14*s.* 11*d.* on these terms, and were, for the most part, very grateful for the convenience thus afforded them. But I must press on, content with simply naming our Ladies' Fund for the relief of poor women at the time of their confinements; our Provident Dispensary; our Infant Nursery, in which we cared for the children of charwomen, &c., while they were at their work; our Amateur Musical Class, which aided our Church music, and afforded us some very pleasant concerts every year, and our "Working-Men's Auxiliary to the Scripture Readers' Society." This latter institution I must dwell on for a moment, if only, first, to pay a passing tribute to that most excellent body of men, the lay agents of London; and, secondly, to mention a peculiar occurrence in connection with it.

In the first place, as to lay agents. The employment of Scripture-readers and other lay agents has supplied a previously existing need.

Owing to the miserable abuse, or rather practical disuse, of the Diaconate in the Church of England, there had long been no standing place for those who were anxious to be employed in their Master's work in an official character within her pale, and who were yet unwilling or unable to obtain regular ordination.

Many and many an earnest, excellent man has in consequence, and most reluctantly, been driven into the ranks of Dissent, though, in reality, he dissented from the Church in nothing, save in that it gave no scope for his holiest desires and best energies; but now many such men labour, and are content to labour, as Scripture-readers in connection with the Church. It has been my privilege to have several such men working with me, and of them I can speak with the warmest affection and deepest respect; while their zeal, energy, and heartiness, in their comparatively humble sphere, have often caused me to blush. I could mention names, were it fitting. I shall refer to one in strong terms in speaking of our Ragged-school; another is working now in connection with that Ragged-school whom it is an honour and a pleasure to me to have known; and another is still labouring in "our parish" with a holy earnestness that needs no human praise.

When, on one occasion, this last-mentioned man was ill, it was soon made evident how he was valued and beloved. The roughest fellows stopped me in the streets to inquire after him; and we were absolutely obliged to engage a person to answer the bell at his house, so numerous were the people who called to inquire after him. But, some will say, Could not curates be as well employed? In the first place, there is in many minds a kind of blind hostility to "a parson," which keeps many doors shut against one, that would be easily opened to a lay agent; in the second place, as I have said before, many persons can and will enter into work as lay agents who will not or cannot take regular orders; in the third place, as lay agents, their time is not taken up with preparation for public services and preaching, and they have more leisure to devote strictly to visiting; and, in the fourth place, curates are necessarily a fluctuating body, while a good lay agent will remain stationary for many years, and by his local knowledge greatly aid the parson. It must not, however, be supposed that these men are mere enthusiasts, chosen for zeal, and blindly turned out to work. In the case of the Scripture-readers' Society, their agents all undergo a severe and searching examination before they are employed,

and act always under a license from the Bishop; and the lay agents of the Church Pastoral-Aid Society are chosen with equal care. Here let me say one word in behalf of the Church Pastoral-Aid Society—to repay a deep debt of gratitude which I owe to it. Nothing could have been done at first in our parish without their kind aid; and when offered the incumbency myself, my first step was, before deciding to accept it, to inquire whether that aid would be continued or not. No one can tell what England owes to the Church Pastoral-Aid and the Curates'-Aid Societies. I admire them both; there is room for both. My own stipend as a curate was in one instance paid by one, and my struggles as an incumbent were aided by the other; but this I must say, the Church Pastoral-Aid were first in the field—they first employed lay agency in the Church of England; and the Curates'-Aid, the Scripture-readers', the City Mission, &c., did but step into a field which they had first investigated,* laying open the dark veins of spiritual destitution and home heathenism which existed there. That Society deserves the sympathy and the help of every earnest, hearty well-wisher of Old England.

* In this statement I find that I have unwittingly erred; the City Mission was really by a short time the first of these Societies.—(*Note to second edition.*)

But to return. It is never wise to give a lay agent the power of the purse, for his own and the people's sake. If he is to be really useful, he must not be confounded with the relieving-officer; and while of course he is the very person to find out and report deserving cases for relief, many a door is open to him, if he gives no relief, which would be closed if he gave it, and he is himself freed from much awkwardness and many a dilemma by being able to say, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I unto you."

A really good lay agent gets an immense, and at the same time a holy and happy influence, in the place where he lives. It was such an influence, exerted by one to whom I have previously referred, that raised our Working-Men's Auxiliary. Its primary object was to bring working-men together for the study of the Bible, for conversational purposes, and for general and friendly intercourse. Its secondary object was to raise funds towards the employment of a second Scripture-reader in our large and populous parish. Both objects have been answered; a true brotherhood of working-men has been formed, and a second Scripture-reader is at work. Many a pleasant evening have I spent with these men,

and much good have I seen resulting from their labours. I mention them, however, more in connection with the following story:—One day my dear friend the Scripture-reader called upon me, and told me he had a curious subject to mention to me. "What is that?" "You know Mr. ——?" mentioning a tailor who kept a small shop in one of our streets. "Yes." "He called me to him to-day, and told me that he wanted some prayers for working-men, to be written by working-men, who knew what a working-man was." "A very good idea. What did you say to him?" "Why, I told him I thought I knew the men who could write, and he has promised to come to our meeting to-night to ask them, but he wants your consent first; and he wants to know if you will look through them to see that all's right before they're printed." I promised to look over them, and heard no more of the matter for some weeks. At the end of that time, however, my friend came to me with a bundle of manuscripts. "Hey—what are these?" "The prayers, Sir." "Are they? Well, I have no time to look over them and master the writing, but you take them home, make yourself master of them, and come to me with them to-morrow." To-morrow came. The manuscripts would have frightened a printer;

so my friend sat down and read them aloud to me, while I wrote them out from his dictation. Most carefully did I abstain from altering a word, except where it was positively necessary; and most carefully also did I abstain from making them, in any sense, my own production. When I had written for some time, I asked, "But who is to pay for the printing of all this?" "Mr. ——." "Indeed! does he know what it will cost? One thousand copies cannot be printed under six pounds at the least, and he can ill afford that. I will gladly help him." "No, Sir," he says, "he will take no help. He has been saving up shillings for a long time, and when he has enough he will print them." This declaration, I found, was based on a firm determination; and my friend the tailor did pay for the first thousand. The writers had all bargained that their names should not be printed, and had given over the copyright of the prayers to my Scripture-reader, on condition that any profits resulting from the sale of them might go to the funds of the Society. Originally, therefore, only initials were attached to each prayer; but now, at the request of several distinguished persons, the occupation of each writer has been added. The fourteenth thousand has just been printed, and many have been the

expressions of deep interest in the book which have reached me from most eminent judges.*

The list of the writers is now before me; and though I withhold their names, I give their occupations, to prove how completely they were "working-men:"—

Sunday, Morning and Evening.—By a Coal-Porter.

Monday, Morning and Evening.—Working Upholsterer.

Tuesday, Morning and Evening.—Sawyer.

Wednesday, Morning and Evening.—Railway Ticket-collector.

Thursday, Morning and Evening.—Policeman.

Friday, Morning.—Railway-Porter.

Friday, Evening.—A Cabman and a Painter.

Saturday, Morning.—Plumber and Plate-layer.

Saturday, Evening.—Policeman.

Prayer for a Working-Man out of Work.—Engine-fitter.

For a Family in Trouble.—Policeman and Painter.

Prayer before receiving the Sacrament.—Warehouse-Porter.

* "Daily Prayers for Working-Men, written by several Working-Men, and originally printed at the expense of a Working-Man." Macintosh, Paternoster-row.

Prayer after receiving the Sacrament.—Carpenter.

All these men were personally known to me, and almost every one of them was a regular communicant at our church. The idea of a prayer for a working-man out of work originated with a man who had been for weeks out of work, and who had a mother and several brothers and sisters chiefly dependent on him.

"A working-man out of work." Ah! friends, you little know what that means. Imagine your rents suddenly stopped, your dividends cancelled, and your debentures a failure for an indefinite time, and all your expenses running on, and then you will have some idea of the position in which a man is placed who is out of work. Those words have a truly deep and bitter meaning to many an ear.

Wherever this work has reached "working-men," they have been deeply interested in it; but all were anxious, before we added the occupations, to know what were the exact positions of the writers.

As a mere literary curiosity, as a mere token of the spread of education, there is a deep interest in the work; but many would feel that the deepest and truest spirit breathes in the whole tone

and sentiment of its pages. Let us look, not with an eye of mere curiosity, at these pages for a moment, and mark with pleasure their deep sincerity, and the way also in which the spirit of our Liturgy breathes through them. There may be expressions in them which more highly educated men would not have used, but there may be also more nerve than they would have shown.

The coal-porter, writing for Sunday mornings, prays thus for the afflicted :—" Bless, O Lord, all sick persons this day, and may every twig of thy rod be sanctified to their souls. Bless the poor of our land, the tried and tempted, and all that are in suffering circumstances, whether of body or mind ;" and he thus goes on :—" Have mercy, O Lord, on all that profane thy holy Sabbath, and upon the drunkards and swearers, and may the wickedness of the wicked soon come to an end."

The upholsterer, on Monday morning, after thanking God for the mercies of the night, prays thus :—" Grant that these abundant blessings, coming from Thee, may fill us with a hearty desire and a more earnest and jealous love for Thee, and for Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and that we may more and more try to follow His blessed example, and not be ashamed of Him before men. Be pleased to forgive the sins of our past lives,

and so control and watch over us, that we may be afraid of offending Thee. Keep Satan far away from us. Let no part of our thoughts be filled with his wickedness, but all with Thy goodness and loving-kindness."

At night he prays:—"We thank Thee for having prospered and blessed us in our labours of this day; that in our troubles, trials, and temptations, Thou didst make us look up to Thee, and thank Thee for Thy goodness in enabling us to bear them. But we confess, O God, that we have sinned very much against Thee this day, in thought, word, and deed. Be pleased not to allow these sins to rise up in judgment against us; but we beseech Thee, O Heavenly Father, forgive them, with the sins of our past lives, for Jesus Christ's sake."

And, again, in praying for the "sick and ill," he says:—"If it should please Thee to send Thy messenger Death, may it be only to bring them unto Thee."

The sawyer prays:—"We humbly ask Thee to help us through this day. Help us to do our duty. Suffer us not to sin against Thee with our tongue. Do forgive all we have done, and make us to be more obedient. Suffer us not to be ashamed of Thee, but make us to walk humbly before Thee

in meekness of wisdom, so that we may not disgrace Thy Holy name, but rather honour it, that our fellow-workmen may not despise Thy religion."

And again :—"Make us to hate and abhor lying, swearing, covetousness, and keep our tongues from joining in the filthy conversation so common among our fellow-workmen." "Help us in every difficulty, and teach us to do our duty to our masters, as working for Thee." "Wake us in time for our work in the morning, and in time to ask Thy blessing."

The ticket-collector prays :—"Guide with Thy unerring wisdom those who fill great and important places; may our *great* men be good men, and may they realize the bond of universal brotherhood."

The policeman prays :—"Make us to praise Thee also for leading us as we would now and always continue to do, to approach Thee as our reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, who loved us, and gave Himself for us."

The railway-porter prays thus :—"We humbly beseech Thee to be with us this day in the discharge of our daily duties, and give to us largely, for Thy dear Son's sake, the spirit of meekness and gentleness, the spirit of patience and of godly

fear, the spirit of wisdom and of waiting, that we may not entangle our souls with temptations too great for us virtuously to bear."

The engine-fitter, in his prayer for a man out of work:—"Do Thou provide work for me, that I may be enabled to provide for the wants of the body and the requirements of those dependent on me. May this act of Thy love convince me how entirely dependent I am on Thee for all the blessings I enjoy." "I know that Thou wilt never leave me nor forsake me, but will be my Guide even unto death."

These are but a few extracts, which faintly show the whole spirit of the work. I am persuaded that those who take a real interest in our "working-men" would read the book with pleasure. For fear any one should say that the work was not genuine, I bade my Scripture-reader carefully preserve the manuscripts. One day he met in the streets one of the writers, who spoke to him about the book. "My prayer is not in," said the man. "Indeed it is." "Surely not." "Well, come home with me, and see." They reached the house. One of the printed copies and one of the manuscripts were produced together. "Is this your writing?" "Yes." "Well, then, take the paper, and I'll read from the book." This was

done; and, at the end, the man exclaimed, "Why, there's not a word altered, and yet I did not know it." "No, friend, you never saw your child so smartly dressed before."

But now, to draw this chapter to a close, let me answer a fancied question,—How were all these Institutions supported, and how were they worked? Did all the labour devolve on the Incumbent; and, if so, where did he find time for all his other duties? As to the first question, it is hard to give an answer; all we can say is, the money came. Sometimes the rivulet of private donations, sometimes the stream of a public collection, sometimes the proceeds of a course of lectures, sometimes the proceeds of a concert, aided us. One great secret was this:—We had many conscientious givers; and, though individually they could do but little, yet collectively those "littles" made a grand "mickle." I have spoken of concerts; and let me pay a passing tribute not only to our own Vocal Class, who made the backbone of each entertainment, but also to those professional singers who so kindly aided us, and that gratuitously. I do not think that there is a more generous class in the world than the order of professional singers and musicians; and I have good cause to say so, consider-

ing the marvellous kindness "our parish" often met with at their hands. Once, at a concert given for our Ragged-Schools, at Hanover square Rooms, and where a most kind friend had procured the aid of several of the most eminent stars of the musical world, one of these ladies said to me, "I came up from Ipswich this afternoon, just to sing my two songs, and must return there early to-morrow." Another said, "I lay in bed till five o'clock, with a blister on, in order to get voice for this evening, and would not have sung for any money they could have offered me, but yours is such a good cause;" and a third—a kindly, genial foreigner by birth, yet with a thorough English heart, and who was receiving a sum I should be afraid to name, for her nightly services, when professionally engaged—said, "If you will get up a little concert in your Ragged-School, for the poor themselves, I will come and give them a little sacred music, and a ballad or two they will understand. I should like them to hear some good music." Can I, after this, withhold my meed of thankfulness for such liberality?

But how were our Institutions worked?

No one fact strikes me more than the great readiness that exists in a London suburban parish

to help the parson, if he is trying to do his duty, and the immense amount of lay aid given us in "our parish" was astonishing. On one occasion we asked our district visitors and Sunday-school teachers to meet us at a little social gathering in our schools; and though, from the severity of the night, and in consequence of a widely prevailing epidemic, many were compelled to decline attendance, we had upwards of 120 present.

In addition to this, we had various gentlemen's Committees, now happily, under my successor, merged into one Church Committee, and by them the whole working business was conducted; so that marvellously little anxiety came, on this score, on the parson's head. Do not let it be supposed, however, that this Committee was a body of mere idle men, with nothing to do. Idle men are easily frightened by a little work. It was composed of men who were steeped in business or in professional engagements, fighting hard for their daily bread, but yet ready to give not only of their income, but also of their time, which was to them their capital, to aid these good works. And this they did so earnestly, that they proved what many of us know, that the more a man has to do, the more he always does, and the better he does it; and that, as a hard-working friend said to me just

now, "One's idle days are those in which one thinks one can grasp the work."

CHAPTER IV.

OUR RAGGED-SCHOOL.

I ONCE saw a man knowingly put his head into a hollow tree in which there was a hornet's nest, and I thought him a great fool for his pains; and I should equally be worthy of the name of fool were I to put my head into the hollow tree of the Ragged-school controversy. Instead of controversy, we will have a few facts. In our part of London there existed, in the midst of some seemingly decent streets, a court, two or three alleys, and two or three streets of six-roomed houses. In this court, these streets and alleys, there lived a population of above 3,000 people. Few of the families squatting there possessed more than one room, and any one wanting to learn the art of vegetating in the smallest possible space of ground would only have had to spend a few days there to have got his lesson to perfection. None of the

houses contained more than eight, and the great mass had only six rooms, and many of the worst principles of intercommunism prevailed there to a terrible extent. The clergyman of the parish, at the time of which I am writing, was a man of wonderful energy and enterprise. He saw a necessity, made up his mind to an effort, started a new work, and then, "with constitutional obstinacy," as he was wont to say, "stuck to it." He could not but see the evils that existed in this part of his over-large parish. He felt it a scandal that streets should exist down which no respectable person could pass with safety; that hordes of immortal souls should be left uncared-for; and so he tried method after method to reach them. Scripture-readers, City missionaries, district visitors, were all found and all put to work; and to one of these district visitors a fact occurred which, I believe, our facetious friend "Punch" has, or ought to have, worked into one of his pictures. The lady called at one of the eight-roomed and eight-familied houses, and rapped at the door, to inquire after a poor woman who lived in the underground apartments. Not knowing the ordained code of signals in use in the street, which would have enabled her so to work the knocker as to bring the person she wanted herself

to the door, she gave an ordinary knock. This brought "the first-floor back," in the shape of a little girl, to the door. "Does Widow Jones live here, my little woman?" "Widow Jones! Mother, here's the tract-woman asking for the lady in the kitchen." All efforts, however, were but of little avail while the streets swarmed with half-naked children, who went to no school, and submitted to no discipline. It is true that there were schools nigh at hand, but they were all too respectable; and if, perhaps, some of the parents ought to have sent their children to these schools, they certainly would not do so. What, then, could be done, but start a Ragged-school? An old carpenter's shop existed behind two houses in the court; it was unoccupied; it was seized upon. A man was found; one of the lay agents of the excellent Church Pastoral-Aid Society gave up his peculiar work to encounter this new labour, and the school was opened. The school was opened; but the children would not be caught! "Billy, Billy, Billy, come and be taught!" was echoed and re-echoed, but all in vain for a while, and it was only after desperate efforts that a few children were coaxed in. When once, however, the ice was broken, scholars began to flow in apace, and before many weeks the little shop was

over-crowded. The new scholars were scholars indeed; they had every thing to learn, and, above all else, they had to learn obedience. To sit still was to many of them a moral impossibility; to fight and fidget was, as it were, their normal occupations. Kindness and firmness were brought to bear upon this excitable horde, and their effects soon began to tell. Many of the pupils were professional thieves, and all of them had a power of abstracting which would have charmed a Highland freebooter. "Where's Billy to-day, boys?" "Oh, Sir, he's in for a copper scuttle." "Where's Tommy?" "He's in for some lead-guttering." "In," of course, meant in jail—a place with which many of them were very familiar. I remember giving one day a lesson on the Cities of Refuge; and in questioning the boys, asked, "If the fugitive reached the city, in what state would he be?" "All right, Sir." "But if he went out again?" "He'd be nabbed." The police at that time were wonderfully plagued by a little old woman, who committed innumerable petty depredations in our neigbourhood, and who, when chased, outran them all, and more than once popped over a succession of garden-walls, without paying any attention to female grace or delicacy. All efforts to catch this little woman, or to find

out where she lived, were for a long time unsuccessful; but, at last, one day, she appeared at an evening lecture at the night-school, and took her seat amongst the grown-up people. She had not long been seated, however, before low murmurs began to spread amongst the boys in the back seats; and some of them, pointing to the old woman, whispered, "It's Jack Long! it's Jack Long!" "It ain't!" "It is!" The controversy waxed strong, and at last the master was forced to interfere, and to ask the cause of the disturbance. He was told their suspicions; and, walking up to the little old woman, he gazed steadily at her. It was Jack Long, who, emboldened by the way in which he had outwitted the police, was determined to try whether his old comrades would detect him or not; but, alas for him! their eyes were too sharp to be so easily imposed upon, and the story getting buzzed about, the police knew exactly where to wait when their old plague recommenced depredations.

The curious feature about many parents is this;—they will chastise, often most intemperately, their own children; but they will not permit any one else to chastise them; and this peculiarity often evinced itself in the visits of

what the head of one of our great public schools called "the schoolmaster's greatest scourge—viz., anxious and irritated Mammas." These "anxious and irritated Mammas" were, however, not at all accustomed to conceal their feelings, or even to keep them under decent control, and their wrath was often violent. I remember, on one occasion, the master had corrected a little boy for gross misconduct. The little boy had threatened "to tell Mother." The threat was carried out; and when the school opened after dinner, a huge virago entered. Walking up to the master, she said, "So you've whopped our Billy." "Yes," replied the master; "he behaved very badly." "Well," screamed the virago, "no one shall whop him but I; and I'll learn you how to do it!" In an instant she attacked him, struck him violently in the chest—a serious matter to a very delicate man—and it was with difficulty that he escaped her. Of course it was necessary to interfere in such a case, and a summons soon brought her to her senses. She came and humbly asked pardon, and promised—a great condescension on her part—that "he might whop Billy to his heart's content, if only he wouldn't have her up before the beak;" and some kindness shown her shortly afterwards in her confinement, by the

master, entirely broke her proud spirit, and made her a steady friend.

Talking of punishment, I must needs here intrude a story of a scene which occurred in quite another spot.

A dear and valued friend of mine own, a dignitary of the Church, and a most accomplished and elegant scholar, thought it his duty to preach a sermon on the correction of children, and took as his text Prov. xiii. 24. He dwelt ably and eloquently on the necessity of chastisement for the young, and carefully pointed out on what occasions and under what limitations it ought to be administered. His congregation was attentive, and he thought to himself that he laid down every condition necessary to insure that chastisement, if needful, should be wisely and judiciously administered. Poor man! Two mornings afterwards, as he was walking in his garden, he spied a neighbour—a great, coarse, and most vulgar woman, one whom he always shrank from—looking over the hedge. He drew back, and quietly turned into a side path; but escape was impossible. In a voice which could not but be heard, his neighbour screamed out, "Mr. Archdeacon! Mr. Archdeacon! I want to speak to you." The Archdeacon turned back, and drawing nigh to

her, politely asked what she wished to say. "A lovely sermon that of yours on Sunday—a lovely sermon, Sir. I hope we shall all profit by it. I've acted on it at once. Our Bill, Sir, was a bad boy yesterday, so I took a stick and larrupped him till I couldn't stand over him any longer." Need I say the poor sensitive preacher slunk away overpowered by such *delicate flattery?*

To return to our Ragged-school. If the day-school was difficult to manage, the night-school was doubly so. Great rough lads and young men swarmed to it, because it was warm and well lighted; but in reality they came for a spree, and not to work. The master gathered around him a band of simple-hearted, earnest labourers like himself, but they often experienced the full difficulty of managing such a crew. One notorious boy was the ringleader in all the mischief, and at last he vowed he would put down the school altogether next school-night. Next school-night came, and with it a full muster of scholars, and Tom B—— amongst them. Looks of intelligence passed from row to row, and the master soon saw that something was in the wind.

The eldest class, and Tom with them, were set to write. Tom began to make a noise; the master walked up to him and bade him be quiet.

"I shan't for you," was the rude reply. "Then I must turn you out of the school." "You turn me out! I'd like to see you," said Tom; and rising up, he first gave a shrill whistle, and then drew from under his coat an old rusty sword, with which he made a vigorous lunge at the master. The whole first class rose also at the sound of the whistle, and out of every jacket was drawn a short club. Tom was immensely excited: "Come on, lads, we'll have no more —— school here; we'll 'a done with this nonsense;" and thus saying, he strode towards the master, flourishing his sword. The moment was a critical one,—the teachers were all frightened, the boys were excited, and retreat was cut off. The weak, sickly, delicate master was on his trial;—he met the difficulty. Drawing himself up and folding his arms, he faced the enraged boy with a steady glance, bursting into a hearty laugh, and saying, "Look at such a sprat as you! Why, Tom, do you think that I am afraid of you or your sword? Pooh! I don't care an atom for either of you!" The lad was nonplussed; he hesitated, he stopped; the master's coolness baffled him. One moment's hesitation was enough; the instant he stopped the master was upon him; one blow sent his sword spinning, another knocked him over. One

of the teacher's walking-sticks was near; the conqueror seized it, and gave his victim a sound drubbing. The revolt was quelled, Tom sneaked back to his place, the sword was impounded as a trophy, and one by one the clubs were collected in a triumphal heap.

To teach in such scenes is a complete gift. Some of those most successful with orderly children could never do it; while, on the other hand, I have seen a mere lad sway at will a great class of men and lads double and treble his age. Firm kindness, a good temper, and a loving heart, are all essential for this task; and, for my own part, I always prefer, for a thoroughly rough school, women teachers. The pupils are used to blows and rough usage—it is the atmosphere they have always lived in, the dialect they best understand; but gentle firmness is a weapon they have never met with, and against which they have no guard. In one of my Sunday-schools I was obliged to keep a class of incorrigibles in a separate room by themselves. Man after man took this class, and failed; I dared not give it up, and dared scarcely keep it on. At last a lady took it; chaos was reduced, and after a short time her complaint was that the boys were being all restored to the regular school, and promoted there.

No man could have done what Miss Marsh has done amongst the navvies, or what Mrs. Wightman has done at Shrewsbury; and would to God there were more Miss Marshes and Mrs. Wightmans amongst us! I, for one, could find them plenty of work.

If our Ragged-school abounded in difficulties, it abounded also in encouragements; its fruits were manifest. In the course of about seven years nearly 1,500 children passed through it; and on one occasion no less than 113 boys and girls were found to have been rescued from the streets, fitted to gain an honest livelihood, and provided with good situations. I was preaching there one Sunday evening, when I saw amongst my hearers a Sergeant of Artillery, in full uniform, decorated with several medals, and with a good-conduct badge. After the service I went up to him, and asked him what had brought him there. "I came, Sir, to see the old place." "What, do you know this school?" "Yes, Sir; I got all my learning here. It took me out of the street; and as I sail for China on Tuesday, I thought I must come back and have one more look at the old place and the old folk before I sailed." The superintendent told me that he had attended both morning and afternoon schools, and the young

men's Bible-class, and seemed altogether delighted with his visit.

We have spoken before of the rebellious ones; there was one lad whom we lost sight of for some years, not knowing in the least what had become of him. The excellent superintendent had given up the Ragged-school, and was gone elsewhere. One day, however, he called on me, and in the course of conversation said, "I have taken part in a night-school in my neighbourhood, Sir, and had a curious surprise a few weeks ago. Just after I had opened school, a young man entered. He was dressed in a respectable black coat and waistcoat, and had on a silver watch-chain and watch; in fact, his appearance was thoroughly respectable. Walking up to me, he said, 'Do you want any teachers, Sir?' I turned towards him. The moment he saw my full face, he exclaimed, 'Why, Mr. Sinden, is it you, Sir?' 'Yes,' I said, 'my name is Sinden; but do you know me?' 'Yes, Sir—yes, full well; and you ought to know me, for I once plagued you rarely. Do you remember H—— E——?' 'Oh, yes,' I said, 'and often wanted to know what had become of him.' 'I'm him, Sir.' 'You!—impossible!' 'Yes, Sir, I am. You wonder at my looks, Sir, but I've changed masters; I served Satan hard,

and he brought me down lower and lower; but, thank God, I now serve the Lord, and He is bringing me up; but I owes it to what I learnt at your school, Sir.'" The seed sown was found here after many days, and he became as great a comfort to his old master as an assistant as he had formerly been a plague as a scholar.

Two or three more tales, the truth of which we may vouch for, may be pardoned here.

Some of our pupils required a marvellous deal of breaking in, but well repaid the trouble. To give an instance. On one occasion, one of the teachers told a boy to sit down in his place. "I shan't," was the rude reply. "You must." "I shan't." "Then I must stand by you till you do." He stood for some little time, but seeing no symptoms of the lad yielding, called the superintendent, who said to the boy, "Now, you must sit down in your place, or you cannot leave the school, if you stay here all night." The lad continued obstinate, the master firm. At nine o'clock the school was dismissed, but the lad was not allowed to leave. Ten struck, eleven struck,—the superintendent and the lad were still in their respective situations. At a quarter-past eleven the fatigue on young muscles overcame the obstinacy of a young will, and the lad dropped into

his seat. No sooner was he down, than with a face of becoming impudence he said, "You'll take me home now, Sir, won't you, for my father and mother will be anxious about me?" The operation once performed was thoroughly successful,—he never gave the superintendent any more trouble.

Another tale about unexpected fruit may perhaps be given here. A poor lad, who was not very refractory, but uncommonly idle, was in the habit of coming to school. His very idleness made him a great trouble to his master and to his parents; and at last, more in the hopes of doing the son good than from other objects, his father determined to accept an offer of work and to remove to Tewkesbury. They had been gone from our neighbourhood a year and a half, when one day the superintendent was told that a lad was at the door, desirous of speaking with him. He went down-stairs, and there saw a tall, ungainly, and most ragged boy awaiting him. "You don't know me, Sir." "What, George, is it you?" "Yes, Sir." "Come in, lad," said his kind friend, who took him down-stairs, made him take a wash at the sink, and then gave him some tea, which was eagerly devoured by the famished lad. After tea the following facts came out. The boy

had gone to Tewkesbury with his father, but having there been treated with great sternness, had run away from home, after having broken open a cupboard and taken a sovereign which had been put aside for rent; had made his way to Bristol, hoping to get a berth on board ship, but having no character, could not get employment; his money had soon been spent, and he had then started to walk to London, in the hope his old teacher would be able to reconcile him to his father. The teacher took him next morning to his dear old clergyman, who ordered him to provide for him for some days, and to write at once to the parents, who gladly consented to receive back their truant, and sent the money to pay the expenses of his journey home. Some time elapsed, and one day a most grateful letter arrived from the boy, stating that the kindnesses shown to him had opened his heart to feel the yet greater love of his Redeemer, and that he who had been once rescued from the pit was now endeavouring, as a Sunday-school teacher, to aid others also.

One more tale before we turn to other topics. On a certain Sunday, a well-dressed, good-looking young man, with excellent manners and a taking appearance, entered the school. Though

the place seemed familiar to him, he was apparently a stranger to all present, but took an eager interest in what was passing around him. After school was over, he entreated permission to say a few words to the children. Permission granted, he mounted the little rostrum, and began:—"My dear children, six years ago I was one of the troublesome scholars in this very school, and I see there a gentleman from whom I received great kindness, and I wish now to speak to you of one about whom I have often heard here, even the Lord Jesus," and with these words he commenced an earnest and affecting address to his young audience.

Many more tales might easily be told, to show what real fruit is often produced by Ragged-school efforts, and many a tale could be told of death-beds rendered triumphant by God's blessing on the teaching of such schools. It is often urged that these schools are frequented by the children of parents who could afford to pay for their children's schooling. This is sometimes, not often, the case, but the question really is not—can they, but will they pay? Many a child of an utterly drunken and worthless parent is saved from ruin by these schools; and it is generally the fault of the managers, if children, who

really ought to be paid for, attend for any length of time at a Ragged-school. But whose children do really attend? I once went into my Ragged-school, when about 120 children were present, and made out a list of the occupations of their parents. More than half were widows' children. A good percentage more were the children of persons who were, from illness or some other good cause, unable to do much work, and scarcely half a dozen were the children of parents in full work.

A clergyman's letter-box often boasts some documents of great curiosity, and I often wish that I had preserved many of the letters which I have received. I have been looking to-day in vain for one received lately from Australia, from a girl who, by the agency of our Ragged-school Bible-class, was rescued from the streets and sent abroad; but the following *bonâ fide* letter has just reached me from the mother of two little scholars who were great pets of mine. As, without any bull, she won't be able to read her own letter if she meets it in print, I will give a copy of it; and, depend upon it, the good woman will be mightily flattered when I tell her what I have done. The following is a verbatim copy:—

"London, *April* —.

"Rev. Sir,—I have moved to the forementioned place, and got A great knocking About in consequence of this Alteration. My children are at school in A similar place to where they were in your time, that is A school of the protestant Church. Revd. Sir I parted my friend and benefactor when you left . . . we all regret your leaving the place my little son pat is always talking of your Revd. he is complete now in all his limbs and his former defect done away with. I got a countryman of mine that effectually cured him he is the promising of a very good boy. . . Revd. Sir we are very thankful to the teacher Mr. —— for his attention to the children pat have made a vast improvement under his care Rev. Sir if you have the kindness and humility of writing the address is —— your revd. will recollect the address.

"N. B. The man who wrote this is a good scholar, an Irishman from my neighbourhood at home. Is worthy of a situation, and capable of fulfilling it. Would willingly embrace one. He is a Mallow man, and would be perfectly grateful and thankful for any thing done, and would wish an interview with your Revd. I can recommend him to be honest and trustworthy."

Having given one specimen of letter-writing, may I be pardoned for adding another or two, though not directly connected with Ragged-schools? Some people decry the spread of education, and think little of its influence, but every child ought to be taught to read and write, if only to keep up the high and holy feelings of family love when families are scattered abroad. Yes, Madam, thanks to the penny-post, your housemaid writes a good many letters, and perhaps some love-ones to Bill; but how many of those letters are to mother and father, brother and sister? I am persuaded that it is scarcely possible to calculate the real good which is done in the way in which the best of all ties are kept up amongst our people through the facilities afforded by the present system of education and of postage. Sometimes, of course, I have been shown letters strongly corroborative of this truth; and I am sure a poor friend of mine will pardon me for narrating the following occurrence:—She was a quaint, rough old woman, a thorough character, living in a wild spot; and one day, as I was walking near her house, I heard a great shout—"Parson, Parson!" I turned, and saw my friend waving her hand to me. On going up to her, she said, "Oh, Parson, coom in; I've had a letter

this three days, and I canna read it, and nobody has a come who can read." Of course, I offered to read it, and found it was from her daughter, who had married a respectable small farmer, and lived some twenty miles off. The hand was a good bold one, and the orthography pretty good, and I easily read the following:—

"DEAR MOTHER,—This cums hopping your well, as it leaves us well; thanks be to the Lord for it. And dear mother, thanks be to the Lord we are doing mighty well; the crops is very good and the taturs stand. And thanks be to the Lord both the cows has good calves, and most of the sheep has double couples; and the sow has a mazing fine litter; and the hens, and the ducks and the turkies has done well. And now dear mother talking of other live stock I've got another babie and thanks be to the Lord he is doing markable well; it ud do your heart good to see him; bless him. And dear mother if you can come over to us harvest time I'd be very glad; if you wants half a sovereign just let me know—and now dear mother, I am, with Tom

"Your affectionate daughter

"JANE ——."

Of course, the coupling of the baby and the live stock was amusing enough, but all was good news to mother, and the invitation and the offer of help cheered her heartily in her lone, widowed life. Even rough Sally could not help a tear; and *I* could not laugh at such a genuine though perhaps quaint letter.

While I am on this topic, I must, however, give one more tale about a letter. There was a very quaint and rather old couple in the village, whom I often visited, William and Mary H. William had often told me about his marriage. "I and our Mary had kept company a long time, but sumhows we ware na married. Joseph the clerk were often at us; he wanted his fees, and he said he'd put up our bands. One day I goes to church, and sure enough he had. So I calls on Mary as I went home, and says, 'Mary, I've been to church.' 'That's right, Bill.' 'What think you I've heard?' 'I dunna know, Bill; summut good.' 'I've heard our bands asked.' 'Have yer, Bill?' 'Yes; did you put them up, lass?' 'No, Bill; did you?' 'No, lass.' 'Then it wur that old clerk.' 'Do you means to forbid them, lass?' 'No, Bill; do you?' 'No, lass; but next Sunday we'll go together and hear them asked.' So we went—and Sunday next; and I'd just spoken to

parson, and when they wur asked out, we just walked up to rails, and he married us there, and we went back, and he gave us all such a sarmint on marriage! It did us all good; and we've been downright happy ever since."

Well, one day when I came home from visiting, my old landlady told me that some one had been down begging me to go up to old Will's house as soon as ever I could—he was in great trouble. I started off at once, and found him and his old woman both in tears. I asked what was the matter. "Oh, Sir, we've had such a letter from our Jack in Africa!" Now, our Jack was a soldier, and had by good conduct risen to the rank of sergeant-major.

His letter was in a high-flown strain. He had been evidently reading Moore and other poets; and he had written when the news of the threatened Chartist riot on the famous tenth of April had just reached the camp. I cannot remember all his letter, but this passage occurs to me:—

"Beloved parents,—I have heard of the terrible dangers that threaten my native land. Perhaps ere now it has been devastated by lawless bands of unprincipled miscreants; perhaps ere now the humble cot in which I first drew nurture has been committed to the ruthless flames. Would

I were with you to protect my ancestral hearth! I cannot be with you; but, beloved parents, my soul hovers over you as the fabled Houri of the Mohammedan, and I do all I can, by wish and supplication, to cast an ægis around you."

Of course, I burst out laughing at this high-flown letter and their grief. They started at my laugh, "What, Sir, is all right? We thought summit terrible had surely happened; we never heard such words afore." I assured them all was right, and translated the letter for them, to their amazing comfort; but I can assure you that letter was shown to every neighbour as "what our Jack could do," and doubly treasured because they could not comprehend it.

I will conclude this long chapter with one touching proof of the value placed on Ragged-schools by some of our poorer classes, drawn from an incident which occurred to me when I lived in London. I was endeavouring to raise money to build a school-chapel, upon the site of the old Ragged-school. The money was coming in pretty well, and I was in good spirits about my undertaking, when one day, on my return home from my work, my wife said to me, "I have something very pleasant to tell you. Two young women called here about half an hour ago, and have left

you seventeen shillings and tenpence for your Ragged-school chapel. I asked them who they were. They said they were sisters, and were living as maid-servants in the same house; one as cook, the other as parlour-maid. Their mistress allowed them the bones and extra dripping, and she also allowed them radishes for their tea in the spring; and by saving the proceeds of the bones, and by denying themselves the radishes, of which they were very fond, they had collected the money, and had brought it for the Ragged-school. I asked them why they cared so much for the school. 'Oh, Ma'am, we had such a kind father, and he was once in the streets, and he got all his learning at the Ragged-school.'"

CHAPTER V.

SCHOOL CHAPELS.

Many and earnest are the inquiries made as to the means of reaching masses of our people in the scattered hamlets and villages of our counties, and the close courts of our towns, and many and various are the remedies suggested and employed for this purpose. While I would speak of these efforts with all reverence and sympathy, and while I would entirely reject the idea of a universal panacea, may I venture to say a word for school-chapels? The pew-system, combined with many other fatal causes, has done a deadly work amongst us; and *wherever* the poor people *will* go, at all events in many parts they will not go to church; they are glad to welcome a parson at their own homes, they like to be visited, to be read to, to be prayed with, but they will not go to church. There are, also, numberless parishes in which there are large clumps of population situated at such a distance from the parish church, that except on very special occasions the people never go near it.

To build churches in all places is impossible; you want a double centre, both school and church, places for education, and places for public worship, where even the poorest can come, and come with ease. Such centres are often presented by school-chapels. In one of my parishes, a great straggling agricultural one of some seven miles in breadth, we had in one extreme part a large hamlet inhabited entirely by poor. While in the rest of the parish all seemed to go on well, this place, accessible only by by-lanes, and situated two miles and a half from the village, seemed a perfect plague-spot. Its population furnished the jail with inmates and the workhouse with bastards to a terrible extent; no decent person cared to go through it at any time, and many trembled at the thought of passing through it after dark or on a Sunday. To this spot my earnest and excellent predecessor, afterwards a famous Bishop on the Bench, directed his attention. Spite of warning, spite of earnest entreaties, spite of many declarations that he could do no good, he determined to commence a cottage lecture there on winter evenings. He went to the hamlet and declared his purpose, and by a promise of payment induced the man with the largest room to open his doors to him. Wet or dry, hot or cold,

he was always at his post, and many was the weary, draggling journey he had through the dirty lanes and damp, shadowy woods on his way to his lecture. At first, the people themselves only mocked; but after a while they began to attend, a spirit of inquiry was aroused amongst them, and the cottage was over-crammed with earnest and willing listeners. Encouraged by his success, the good man began to look out for better accommodation, and at the same time it was suggested to him that it would be an excellent thing if he could open an infant-school on the spot. Taking counsel with a kindly farmer or two, he determined to build a large room, with a cottage attached to it, where not only could a school be held, but where divine service could also be performed. The plan was caught at by many of his neighbours, the needful money was collected, and the chapel-school built. Every Sunday afternoon service was held there, and when I went to take charge an over-full congregation of the poor attended every service. As for the character of the people, it was completely changed; sobriety reigned, thieving disappeared, bastardy became a rare evil, and every respectable person in the neighbourhood felt not only no dread, but a real pleasure, in visiting the spot. The people

also began, in considerable numbers, to find their way to the parish church in a morning, and to take their place at the Lord's table.

One of these persons, an old shoemaker, generally remained at the parsonage after church in the morning, and walked with me to the afternoon service. One day he was talking about the change which had come over the hamlet, and I asked him how they used to spend their Sundays in old times. "Oh, Sir, we just got up in the morning and had a loiter and a pipe on the green; then we got our breakfasts; then we turned out and got some beer, and had, may be, a man-fight, may be a dog-fight or a cock fight, and a deal of cursing and swearing and quarrelling, and more beer; then we got our dinners, and then had another pipe and a chaff, and perhaps a fight; then we went off a-poaching or a-loafing about, and picked up any stray we could, and then home to supper, and then more beer and more fighting, and then to bed. There warn't one man on the green who had not been in prison, nor one girl but had had a chance child or two; there warn't one on us as had a good character, or one whom any one liked to trust, but it's all changed now; there ain't been one of us in prison for three years, and we'll stand for good conduct on a Sun-

day against any place." This pithy description was, I believe, accurately true. So much for the working of the chapel-school in that place.

My next experience was in the Black Country in Staffordshire. Some dear and valued friends of mine, large coal and iron masters, were very unhappy about the state of the men at their works. The parish church was about a mile and a half off; it was no use building a church just by the works, the people would not go to it if they did, and schools were terribly wanted. They determined to build some large schoolrooms first, but when they began to plan, the thought of a school chapel burst upon them. Plans were prepared for a large cruciform building, the transepts being near the middle; the two main sections being devoted—one to the girls and the other to the boys, and the cross-piece being used at one end as an infant-school, at the other as a chancel, with a proper communion-table and rail, a pulpit and reading-desk. The two ends were cut off from the cross-piece by very heavy hanging curtains, which deadened all sounds, and which could yet be withdrawn in a minute. Under each room there was a cellar, into which the benches and chairs for divine service could be let down by a trap-door in a few minutes, leaving the whole

space available for scholastic purposes. Nearly eight hundred persons could be thus accommodated for Divine service, and the whole room was occupied every Sunday by the workmen of the works, and by their wives and families. A good, earnest chaplain laboured amongst them every week-day, and they, to use their own expression, came "to visit him on Sunday." The effect produced by these efforts was very great: the brutal riots which once abounded were checked; a kindly feeling sprang up between masters and men, and between neighbours; the children were cared for, and trained for a good end; and, above all, many a one really learned to pray, and learned to value the precious promises given to them through their Saviour.

I remember on one occasion being present at a large tea-party, which was given in the schools to the workmen and their wives. After tea we had a kind of meeting, and several gentlemen addressed the assembly. After we had been speaking some time, a huge, one-eyed man rose in the middle of the room, and said, "Meesters and neighbours, we'en all heard what gentlemen and parsons has to say; may I say what the workmen has to say?"

The senior partner of the firm immediately rose,

and asked him to come up on to the platform, and have his say out. He came up and spoke: "Meesters and mates, I'm nout but a rough puddler, but I've got a heart. Things used to go on terrible bad here. On Sabbath-day we men got up late, and lumbered about, hands in pockets, and dogs at heel, and cussed and fought, and got into trouble; and our missusses cooked and quarrelled, and never dressed tidy or Sabbath-like, at all. As for the childer, they got into the gutters, and made mud-pies, and fought, and cussed as much as we; and it was like hell on earth. Now, how is it? We men gets up, and dresses tidy, and comes here a-morning, and the children comes too, and we hear summit good, and our wives get the houses tidy and dinner ready, and then after dinner the childer comes to Sabbath-school, and in the evening we all comes together again; and there ain't no fighting, and mighty little drinking, and the babes don't cuss, and we'en welly left it off, and we's ten times happier than we were. And last Sabbath after dinner I strolled in here, and the little ones, instead of cussing and swearing, was just alifting up their hymns to God; and to hear their sweet voices at such work, just lifted me up (suiting the action to the word), till I scarce knew where I was; and I thanks you,

meesters, for it; and that's all I've got to say."

No eloquent and powerful oration was ever received with such hearty plaudits as this speech of our huge friend, and none ever produced a more sterling effect on his audience.

My next experience was in town. On the site of an old Ragged-school, we managed by great exertions to erect a large and commodious school-chapel, in the midst of a densely-populated court. School was carried on here on week-days and Sundays, and Divine service on Sunday morning and evening, and many a stray sheep has been gathered in; and many a one who would not take their shabby clothes to sit side by side with the smartly-dressed people of even the free seats, found there a place in which they could really pray and praise their God. It is no use arguing with the poor, that they ought to go to church, whatever their dress may be; experience teaches me that there is more proud reticence amongst them than amongst the rich, and they will not put their ragged clothes by the side of the smart silk dress and good black coat. In these smart, dressy days, want of proper clothing keeps more people from Divine service, either in church or chapel, than any other cause.

Clergymen and others often, too, make a fearful mistake by talking to the poor in their own language. Talk to them kindly, talk to them as to fellow men and women, talk to them with real sympathy, and you meet with sympathy and respect—nay, more, with real affection from them; but lower yourself to their style of language, and they feel it to be a keen insult, for they know you are stooping to them, not to raise them up to your level, but to bring yourself down to theirs.

Few people know what a terrible struggle it is for those who feel that they have departed far from God, and who feel also that that departure is well known to others, to return to even an outward decency of life, and especially to summon up courage to enter any place of worship. As an illustration of the truth of this statement, I will give an instance which has been recalled to my mind by a valued friend; and though the fact has before been mentioned some years ago in the local press, I shall doubtless be pardoned for giving it a wider circulation:—

In the Ragged-school chapel of which I have elsewhere spoken, there was an old man in constant attendance, to whom the Word of God had been specially blessed, and who regularly attended Divine service. This man was indeed

one who had gone far astray, but had been brought to a better mind, and regularly attended the morning service. Another person had been induced to attend the evening service at the school, into which he could slink without much observation, but could not bring himself to come openly to the morning service. At last, one Sunday, having been much pressed, he determined to be present in the morning, and started from home with that object in view. He dared not, however, go straight to his destination, but wandered down one street, round another, up a third, down a fourth, till he found himself in a small alley, from whence he could make a dart into the room. He bolted in, feeling glad to be there, but caught sight of our old friend above mentioned. As he told the superintendent afterwards, "I was struck all of a heap, till you could kave knocked me down with a feather, for I thought I was the *worst man but one* in the whole neighbourhood, and who should I see there *but the worst man himself!*"

My last experience has been in a large, straggling country parish, where groups of the population lie at varying distances from the parish church, which is, in itself, far too small for the wants of the parish. One of these groups of

population lie at about an average of a mile and a half from the church. Scarcely one person from amongst their number went to any place of worship whatsoever, and scarcely any of the children went to school. At the earnest request of three kind farmers, and with their hearty assistance, I first opened a barn for Divine service on Sunday afternoons. The barn was crowded with persons who used not to go anywhere to service; and in a short time, aided by the hearty co-operation of many of my parishioners, a chapel-school, with a teacher's residence, was erected, at a cost of about £420. In this room we have a mixed school on week-days, a Sunday afternoon school, and a Sunday evening service. The school and service are both admirably attended, and the effect produced by them has been most marked.

This success has so encouraged me, that I trust, before long, with the kind assistance of the employers of labour on the spot, to erect another iron school-chapel in another corner of the parish, containing a large knot of brickmakers. One lesson I have, however, learned in these experiments,—I never would erect another school-chapel without attaching to it an apse, or small chancel, to be used solely for the purposes of Divine service. A curtain could be drawn across

the entrance to this apse when the room was being used for other purposes, and withdrawn again for service; but the entire separation of the apse would give to the whole placè an appearance of special consecration, to the effect of which even the rudest people are most open. An apse also would allow of the decent celebration of the Holy Communion; and no congregation should be gathered together in any place where that sacred rite is not celebrated.

Turning for a moment from this subject, let me touch on two other topics—Cottage lectures, and Children's services.

I have had considerable experience in cottage lectures, and have ever found them most efficient means of gathering together our poorer people in acts of Divine worship and for instruction. In my first parish, at the request of my excellent Vicar, I commenced a cottage lecture in an outlying part of the parish, from which very few people ever came to church. A friendly widow opened her doors to me; and, once a week, at seven o'clock in the evening, the people assembled to meet me. At first but a very few came, but soon more and more began to drop in, till at last nearly fifty regularly attended. Of these fifty, more than two-thirds soon became regular attend-

ants at the parish church, and many of them became regular and devout communicants. I can safely say, that I have in country parishes gathered in more communicants from amongst the poor by cottage lectures than by any other agency. In one parish, on my first going to it, I was warned not to go down one particular alley, as my predecessor had been kicked from one end of it to the other. My only answer was, "I will go there regularly, and yet will answer for it I shall never meet with one act of rudeness." The first day I entered it, one scowling look after another was given me. I met them with a smile, and a cheery "How do you do?" I then entered the house of a man who was reported to me as a thorough Tom Paine infidel. A surly "Come in!" answered my knock; and I entered, to witness a curious scene. The old woman had scalded her foot terribly a few days before, and the old man was endeavouring to doctor it. One glance told me that he was making a terrible mess of the wound; so I gently pushed him aside, and set to work at it myself, writing on the back of a card a prescription for some salve, and dispatching him for it to a neighbouring chemist. The leg was all duly dressed; and, when dressed, no objection was made when I took out my Bible and began

to read. Next day, when I went down the alley, the people all saluted me kindly; and I heard one woman whisper, "That's the parson as dressed old Molly ——'s leg." One good woman, during that day's visits, offered me her house for a cottage lecture; and when, after the lapse of two years, a church was built at the end of the alley, my cottage-lecture congregation moved into it *en masse*, and took their seats there amidst its most regular, earnest attendants.

The scene with the old woman reminds me of a story told me by my late dear friend, the Rev. David Laing:—"Many years ago, before Scripture-readers and City missionaries had penetrated, as they have done of late, into every court and alley of the metropolis, and when, in many parts of town, the presence of a clergyman was never dreamt of, I was called upon to enter one of the filthiest, dirtiest courts in all London—a court inhabited chiefly by thieves and prostitutes. As I was entering, I was met by a policeman, who warned me of the nature of the inhabitants, and warned me also of my danger. I thanked him for his warning, but of course went on; not, however, without some trepidation. As I entered the court, I caught sight of some groups of idle roughs, who looked at me with scowls, and began

to speak to each other in angry tones. I felt uncomfortable; but, just then, a pretty little child ran across the court, and fell down just before me. You know I always love children; so without a thought, I caught it up, wiped its face with my handkerchief, and gave it a kiss. When I had done this, I looked up again. Not a scowl was to be seen in the court; my questions were answered civilly; I found out the person I wanted, visited him, and left without one rude word, and with even some rough but pleasant greetings."

A good example this of the force of courtesy even over the wildest natures; but sometimes a stronger line of conduct may be needful, and may succeed equally well. I must beg leave, in confirmation of this statement, to relate an anecdote told me by a labouring man of that most excellent, earnest, hearty, genial Christian gentleman, minister, and bishop—Montague Villiers, late Bishop of Durham, a man whom it was a privilege to know, and who, if well known, was of necessity heartily loved. The poor man who told me the tale was an earnest and regular attendant at church and at the Lord's table, and himself narrated to me the means of his conversion. "I was a downright scoffer and infidel, Sir; and one day, when I was not very well, Mr. Villiers' curate

came in to me, and began to speak to me, and I got very angry with him, and kicked him out of the house. Next day, who should knock at the door but the vicar himself? When I opened it he walked in, and, quietly shutting it after him, took a chair, and placing it so that he pinned me into a corner, sat down. 'B——,' says he, 'I hear you kicked my curate out of your house yesterday.' 'Yes, I did; what did he want to come bothering me for?' 'Well, I'm come to-day, and you can scarcely kick me out, I'm too big; so I'll give you a bit of my mind.' And he did give me a bit of his mind, and, I'll promise you, I was never so talked to before or since; and after a while, though I was very angry at first, I began to listen to him, and when he knelt down to pray I knelt with him; and I'll promise you, I was at church safe enough next Sunday morning, and have gone there ever since, and mean still to go, till I die."

To return now to services for children. It is heresy doubtless to many to say any thing against that "terrible incongruity," our present morning service—the most curious mixture of distinct services that ever existed; and yet I venture to say that the effect of that most lengthy service has been and is very bad upon our children. No one

is a more hearty admirer of Sunday-schools than I am; but no one feels more deeply than I do the mischief of gathering children together and keeping them at school and church for more than three hours and a half at a stretch. I have, therefore, with the full consent of the Bishop, instituted a child's service in the schoolroom. The school meets at ten o'clock. A few minutes before eleven teaching ceases, the boys and girls are arranged in two masses, with the infants in front, and the minister mounts a small rostrum. The service then commences with chanting one of the prefatory sentences, and the service goes on, the children being trained to make all the responses, and to chant the Canticles. The whole service is, however, not performed on any one Sunday, but is thus divided:—

1st Sunday—Morning prayers.

2d Sunday—Morning prayers, to third collect, and Litany.

3d Sunday—Morning prayers, to third collect, and Communion Service.

Two hymns are sung at due intervals, and then a sermonette, illustrated with anecdotes, and even with pictures, follows. All is attention, the children enjoying thoroughly the service, which lasts from one hour to one hour and ten minutes,

and leaving the school with an impression of having joined in what they could understand, and of having heard what they could remember. The experiment has been tried for too short a time for me to speak dogmatically as to its ultimate success, but I have no fears myself on this score, and others speak confidently. I should say that my parishioners have presented me with a harmonium for the use of this service,—a gift which has pleased the children mightily. While, however, the experiment is a new one with me, it has been tried successfully elsewhere. Before commencing the step in my own parish, I wrote to three gentlemen—one who would be called a High Churchman, and the other two men of Evangelical sentiments—and asked their experience on the point. They answered me thus:—

"1st. Our school service is at three on Sundays, in the largest of our schoolrooms. The boys are ranged on one side, the girls on the other, choir-fashion. The service begins with a sentence, confession, absolution, and up to the end of the Psalms, boys singing the Decanal, girls the Cantores verses. Then a few verses from the Old Testament—Magnificat. For second lesson the Gospel, and so on to the end of the third collect; then a short, plain address, a ser-

mon from the Gospel; then a hymn, and the blessing. I always wear surplice, as in church. If I had my own way, I would have this in church; but I do not like to disarrange the parochial three P. M. service. The thing has answered remarkably well, and has had twelve years' trial."

The second says:—

"I will answer your questions *seriatim*:—

"1st. The service at present consists of Morning prayers, Litany, and sermon. On alternate Sundays I think of having the Communion service instead of Litany, as now the children never hear the Commandments read.

"2d. It lasts an hour and a quarter, or rather less; sermon fifteen minutes.

"3d. I find it popular with the children, for the morning attendance at Sunday-school has nearly doubled. I find the children of other parishioners attend also, and some adults. These last are ignored, as far as the character of the sermon is concerned."

The third writes thus:—

"Our Sunday-school service is very satisfactory. Superintendents, and all who take part in it, speak very highly of it. Children enter intelligently into it and appreciate it. In the

course of three Sundays the whole Church Service is gone through. We brought three Prayer-books in sheets, and had them bound to suit our purpose.

"I. Morning prayer, one Lesson, and no Litany.

"II. First part of Morning prayer, one Lesson, and Litany.

"III. First part of Morning prayer and Commandments, with Epistle and Gospel. The piano is played, and singing and responding are inculcated. One or two questions on the Scripture insure a lively attention, and then a short address is given. The whole service and sermonette are comprised within the hour.

"The elder children go to church; we encourage the younger children to look forward to doing so as they rise to the higher classes."

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEGGING PARSON.

There is in every house, inhabited by any person who is at all connected with public life, a great institution called the "waste-paper basket," and into that waste-paper basket, as into a gulf which can never be filled up, are committed endless papers,—advertising vineyard associations, tariff wines, cheap teas and coffees, and inimitable mourning, and with them endless prospectuses of new Mines in Cornwall, Belle-Vue Hotels in Wales, new Joint-stock Banks in Timbuctoo, with branches in Pall-mall, and such other traps for unwary souls as are being perpetually set under the Limited Liability Act.

In some cases these papers are all read by the receiver before he casts them away, if they present to him any chance of making money; in other cases they are rejected at the moment of opening or even without opening; but, generally speaking, no paper descends more rapidly and surely into that Maelstrom than what is generally called a

begging-letter, in which some charitable project is put forth, or in which some poor clergyman seeks aid in his endeavours to build a new church, new schools, or a new parsonage-house in some destitute district. All the other foredoomed tenants of the waste-paper baskets are, as a rule, cast aside with a mere "Pshaw!" or with an incredulous smile; but these are cast away with an irritable impatience, and often even with angry denunciations, as if some positive wrong had been inflicted on the receiver, or as if he had suddenly met with an intolerable nuisance.

In this land there are chivalrous men who will defend any person supposed to be falsely accused or misunderstood, but I never yet met with one bold enough to say a word for "begging parsons," who are looked upon as public nuisances.

Alas! they are intolerable nuisances to many, but, poor fellows, they have rather a hard time of it; abused if they do not, as if by magic, get up all the institutions needed in a large parish, and much more plentifully abused if they endeavour to do so. You have just received a begging-letter—you are angry; but before you condemn the writer utterly, let us take a glance at your persecutor. You will certainly not find him in any sumptuous, or even comfortable house;

he has no carriage, no horses, no livery-servants; he is very probably living in that little "quiet street," in a six-roomed house, with two maid-servants, and a gentle, lady-like wife. Speak to him, and you will find him a gentleman by birth and education; a man well known at his University, highly connected, with numerous great relations, yet quietly, earnestly, faithfully waging amongst people with whom he has no natural relationship, no natural tie of interest, a war with ignorance and vice, with poverty, misery, sin, and degradation; fighting a harder battle than was ever fought by a Hildebrand or a Thomas à Becket; fighting with few to support him, few to encourage him, and nothing to rely upon save three gifts of his Captain, "Faith, hope, and love." No man of the eleven thousand he works amongst works as long hours as himself, no man has more anxiety on his shoulders, no man is so incessantly in contact with every form of human suffering and care as he is, and yet no man does his work more cheerfully, more heartily, than he does, and it is only the great need that is around him that drives him to undertake that most thankless of all tasks, begging for others; it is only his sense of his deep responsibility to God and his Church that urges him to intrude upon you. The pay

this man of refined tastes, refined habits, refined education, gets for all his labours scarcely exceeds, perhaps, what you give your butler, and even this scanty salary is mulcted by a host of claims forced on him by the very necessities around him, of which you have no conception. Yet you blame him; you cannot afford him one sovereign, which would gladden that poor parson's heart, though it would be but as a drop towards the sum his conscience tells him he must raise; and your very non-answering of his letter may compel him to mulct his own narrow income yet more, or may entail upon him yet further labours; but spite of your anger he will beg on till he gets what he needs, only in all probability his health, if not his life, may be sacrificed in the undertaking.

No one can tell the struggle of many a begging parson, of many an incumbent of our large town parishes. I may be called a prejudiced witness, I may be twitted with the fact that I am a parson myself, and a begging parson into the bargain, and yet I solemnly declare my belief that in no Church and in no age have any body of men been found who, for zeal in their work and earnestness of self-sacrifice, have equalled many of the begging parsons of the present day.

I know men at this moment—men to whom I

am not fit to hold a candle, men of education, men of great intellectual power, men of true refined taste, who, amidst all the self-indulgence and self-seeking of their generation, are carrying their work amidst our millions in a more than missionary spirit, wrecking their own private fortunes, wrecking their own health, wrecking all earthly prospect of enjoyment and pleasure, that they may have the happiness of reclaiming some of our home heathen, and of doing what in them lies to roll back the tides of ignorance, vice, ungodliness, and reckless discontent, which have, ere now, nearly overwhelmed the nation in ruin.

I will give a picture of one such man who was essentially a "begging parson;" one of the most persevering and successful beggars I ever met with—I mean my late revered and beloved friend the Rev. David Laing. Numbers have received applications from him; no one who was likely to give, "knew him not by name at least," and many a one who was well able to give received his letters and threw them aside with a contemptuous "Pshaw!" or an angry exclamation. Yet let one who knew him well, and who is himself well known, speak for him. I will call the Rev. Canon Dale, late Vicar of St. Pancras, and Canon of St. Paul's, into the witness-box, and ask him to repeat

the evidence he gave when he preached a funeral sermon on the occasion of the death of Mr. Laing. To a most crowded congregation he addressed the following words :—

"He 'worked.' He had been known to me by reputation as a laborious and faithful minister of Christ long before we had become personally acquainted; and all that I had heard of the Rev. David Laing, as Chaplain to the Middlesex Hospital, and as taking a prominent part in the management of that admirable institution, the St. Ann's Schools (now deservedly honoured with the Royal name and sanction), had prepared me to expect in him the qualifications requisite for an effective parochial ministry. And this it was that led to a connection for which, while I live, I shall bless God. I find that on the 18th day of March, 1847, we had determined to appoint at once four clergymen, who should labour in as many districts in which there was yet no consecrated place of worship. All arrangements, of course, devolved upon me; and one of the four districts which I determined forthwith to mark out, was that which is this day, God be praised, the district parish of Holy Trinity, Haverstock hill. On the very next morning, 19th of March, 1847, by a coincidence which I shall ever regard as providential, I had an

unexpected visit from Mr. Laing, who at once, with his characteristic frankness and decision, said to me, 'I hear that you are meditating the formation of several new districts in your great parish. If you are disposed to appoint me to one of them, I will work it.' My answer, based on previous knowledge of the person with whom I had to deal, was, 'If you will work it, I will certainly appoint you to a district.' And accordingly, on the 1st day of June, 1847, Mr. Laing entered alone upon a district of 9,000 souls, which had been till then without church, without schools, without any other provision for pastoral ministration to the sick and dying than that which could be supplied by the then exemplary but over-tasked minister of Camden-town Chapel, to whom there remained, even after the separation of the new district, a population of at least 20,000!

"The first ministerial act of our dear friend was as characteristic of the man as the circumstance that led to his appointment. 'Fellow-Christians,' he said, in an address which was largely circulated throughout the district—'fellow-Christians, I come among you to be useful in every possible way. The connection between us, which commences this day, is the closest which can be formed upon earth between those not

united by blood, and is often far more permanent. How much may be done towards making themselves and their neighbours happy by 9,000 people who are united in Christian feeling to work out Christian objects! Let me then invite your hearty and affectionate co-operation. I undertake the very serious responsibility of my present office, because I like and can bear arduous work, and because I know that God can and will prosper His work in whose hands soever He may place it.' Thus it is clear that, from the first, he not only worked, but that he worked 'for the Lord;' and one part of this work is marked out in his opening address, towards the completion of which no parochial minister, in such a charge, ever made a nearer approach than he, and which I now quote, because I shall make special reference to it in the sequel:—'I trust one day to know you all INDIVIDUALLY.'

"Nor were these vain words. The work that was to be done was the Lord's work—the strength by which alone it could be accomplished was the Lord's gift; and our dear friend relied upon the exceeding great and precious promise, 'As thy days are, so shall thy strength be.' When, after the interval of a few weeks, he succeeded in obtaining from the North-Western Railway Com-

pany the occupancy of a room capable of accommodating 200 persons, his first Lord's-day congregation, after the address I have just quoted had been left at every house through the district, amounted to twenty-three persons, and continued for some weeks without any considerable increase. But he was not to be thus daunted or discouraged; his steadfastness of purpose was equal to his singleness of heart; and his resolve might be expressed in the words of David: 'I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only.' Nor was his faithful perseverance without its fitting reward. The early part of the year 1848 saw his little temporary church filled to overflowing, and in the same proportion were his means of usefulness increased; for it was a distinctive mark of his ministry from the beginning, that whenever he gained a hearer, he rarely, if ever, failed to win a heart.

"By the prompt and liberal aid of his little flock, 'whose hearts God had touched,' and by a sacrifice of his own private means, which would have been lavish rather than liberal had there been any other claims than hers who was willing, like himself, to spend and be spent for Christ, large and commodious schools were erected, which

were used as a church on the Lord's day, affording accommodation for 600 worshippers; and these schools it was my privilege to open, on Sunday, July 9, 1848. Emboldened by the success thus vouchsafed, and continually gathering around him fresh accessions of friends from those who 'esteemed him very highly in love for his work's sake,' he took immediate steps for the erection of the permanent church; and after many delays, and discouragements, and difficulties, which could only have been surmounted by the patience and perseverance of faith, the house of prayer in which I address you this day was consecrated on the 15th day of October, 1850, little more than three years after his entrance upon the work of the district.

"The original congregation of twenty-three had by this time grown into a goodly gathering of 1,500 worshippers; and the words of the Lord by the prophet Isaiah were thus literally accomplished: 'A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation; I the Lord will hasten it in his time.' Nay—for then also it was my task to preach at the special instance of our revered Diocesan—my text was itself in a manner prophetic or anticipative of his future: 'We, then, as workers together with him, beseech you

also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.'

"And on this occasion his noble spirit of disinterestedness and self-sacrifice did indeed pre-eminently shine forth. It was his special request, urged with an earnestness to which I could not but defer—though I then doubted the expediency of compliance, and have since found reason to regret it—that the income of the minister arising from pew-rents should be fixed at the lowest possible standard, in order to afford a proportionate number of free and unappropriated sittings. Of such this church has in consequence a larger number than any in the parish of St. Pancras, not excepting the parish church itself. And had this been all, it might have sufficed simply to state the fact, possessing, as he was then supposed to possess, a competence sufficient for his own very moderate wants, and being credited with more than competence by those whose only standard of judgment was the open hand and open heart. But it was little suspected, even by those who knew him best, how largely he had already encroached upon his private resources—how fearful an incumbrance of debt rested upon the newly-consecrated sanctuary—how, in order to relieve the friends associated with him in the undertak-

ing, he had determined to charge himself with a personal responsibility which could only be met by the ENTIRE sacrifice of his income arising from the church.

"You will readily believe that I was no indifferent spectator of devotedness and disinterestedness such as his, though it was to me as a mirror which reflected my own comparative littleness. When, therefore, in the year 1853, a valuable preferment fell to my nomination, my thoughts immediately turned towards your beloved pastor, as having the strongest claims upon me, though I knew not then the full extent of the sacrifice which he had made for your sakes and the Gospel's. To my first inquiry, whether he would accept this rectory (the income of which would not only have borne the annual burden that rested on him from the debt, but would have yielded a surplus more than sufficient for his plain and simple mode of living, he replied: 'They who feel deeply do not express themselves in many words. I could not tell you how much I was gratified by your question of yesterday; but I do not think that I ought to desert my post. My Master has thus far given me strength for the work to which He has called me, and it would be a failure of faith to suppose that continued work will not

have continued strength. The discouragements of London work seem to me to require that I should go on. A young man can seldom bear them, and many even with more years cannot work without constant light. It is my nature to work, and obstacles seem to bring out my obstinacy, and to make me work the harder; whilst I have long felt that it is honour enough to do our Master's work, without expecting to reap from our own services.'

"Notwithstanding this refusal, however, I still thought it fit, after the interval of a few weeks, to repeat the offer; and I then requested him to take at least four-and-twenty hours for deliberation,—consulting with her who was at once most deeply interested in his decision, and best able to advise him in it, and commending the matter to God in prayer. On the second day of May, 1853, the final answer came, and it was to this effect:—'It appears to me that my duty lies in London, and that I ought not to avail myself of your last kind offer. With very earnest thanks, therefore, for this mark of your regard and confidence, I feel that I ought to decline the living. It is a comfort to me to feel that you understand me—to feel that there is confidence between us.'

"Yes, brethren, I *did* understand him, and *you*

will understand him too. He had, indeed, as he deserved to have, my fullest confidence; never could it have been more worthily bestowed, never more amply deserved, never more abundantly repaid. Of his parochial work, however, from this period to that of his retirement—his involuntary and inevitable retirement I will call it—to the more limited sphere of duty on which he was engaged when his Master called to him, 'Come up hither,' I shall leave his successor to speak in the evening discourse.

"I return to Mr. Laing's own retirement, of which I spoke as inevitable and involuntary; I called it involuntary, because to part from you whom he so dearly loved was like rending his heart in twain; I called it inevitable, because he had so largely taxed his own private resources that he could no longer retain his post without compromising the principle on which he had acted through life, 'to render unto all their dues.' When, however, a crisis seemed to be impending, the extremity of man was proved to be the opportunity of God. The circumstances of his case were made known to the present Bishop of the diocese, who, in the kindest and most generous manner, conferred on him the valuable preferment which he held at the time of his decease. Seasonable

as it was, however, he could not comfortably avail himself of it until he had secured for the oversight of his beloved flock a pastor of like spirit with himself.

"In every way, therefore, this church, with the varied ministries of mercy of which it is the source and centre, is itself his best and most enduring monument; and, oh, may the faithful, and assiduous, and affectionate pastorate of which he led the way, of which he was himself the example, and which you now enjoy, be so continued, so perpetuated here, that the latest generation may 'arise and call him blessed!'"

Here is a good character for a beggar! Do you not think, reader, that many a one who pshawed and neglected his begging-letters would be only too thankful if they could end life thus honoured by man, and face Heaven with such a character? And you would have doubly thought so if you had seen the large church crowded to suffocation at his funeral—if you had seen the procession of more than a mile long that followed the simple hearse and two mourning-coaches that conveyed the corpse and his more immediate friends to his grave—if you had seen the more than 5,000 persons who were grouped round that grave! Yet of all the men I ever met with he was the most

humble. On the same day that Mr. Dale spoke of him, I was able to say :—

"While, however, we speak of his courageous and abundant labours, we must not forget his humility and self-distrust, and the spirit in which, while others saw what he had accomplished, he ever taxed himself with what he had left undone. Untiring in his public duties, untiring also in his private ministrations, the constant watcher by death-beds, the constant visitor of the house of mourning, the ready comforter in every sorrow, his earnest cry was, 'I am but an unprofitable servant;' and if he directed others to the cross of Christ, and declared that His perfect atonement and perfect righteousness were the only ground of our hope, he rested his own title for acceptance, not on any thing that he had done, but in that perfected work which had been accomplished for him. What were 'flattery to the living is but justice to the dead,' and I am bound to say that in all my experience I never met with any one who more utterly cast away all thought of self-merit, or more earnestly offered his good works, not as grounds on which to claim recompense, but as the humble tribute of grateful love to his Father and his Redeemer."

But enough in reference to this good man. Let

me now pass to some personal experiences in begging; but before I do so I must relate a curious anecdote of a valued friend, who has laboured for many a long year in Birmingham. This excellent man has in his room a picture of a church and schoolrooms, which he erected in one of the worst and poorest parts of Birmingham. As he is somewhat of a humorist, he has framed in one corner of the picture a letter which he received in answer to one of his applications:—

"Sir,—In reply to your letter of the —th, I beg to state, that though I admire you as a man and respect you as a minister, yet, on principle, I never give to any thing.

"I remain, your obedient servant,

Martha ——."

Where this lady could have got her "principle" I do not presume to say, but assuredly it was not from Him "who loved us, and gave himself for us."

My own first experience as a beggar was learned in a large, straggling country parish where I was curate, and where my worthy vicar was anxious to erect a second church. Full of youthful ardour, I seized a heap of circulars and of begging-cards, and sent them out north, south, east, and west.

Slowly, and by driblets, the answers came back. One had too much to do at home, one had too much to do abroad; one could give but little, and so would give nothing; one had so much to do on "her son's property," the wealthiest nobleman in England, that she could not give at all. All, however, were not blanks; many kind and generous answers came back, and one good man made me smile with the following epistle:—"Dear Sir,—I heartily approve your good work. I wish to say, 'God bless you in it,' so I send you a sovereign, though I can scarcely afford it, that I may say so without seeming a hypocrite." One of the kindliest contributions I received was from the scene of my first curacy, from whence came a small sum of money, doubly welcome because it was accompanied by a goodly list of the dear old names, names of many who must have given "beyond their power."

Some amusing incidents happened in this begging. Our collecting-cards were ruled with black and red lines crossing each other; and one day I put one of these cards into an envelope, and dispatched it to a worthy dame at a distance. In a day or two afterwards, on opening one of my letters, I found the card returned, with a note to the following effect:—

"Rev. Sir,—I should willingly have helped you in your benevolent designs, had I any confidence that the truth would be taught in the church which you propose to erect; but the red lines on the collecting-cards make me tremble, lest, in aiding you, I should be fostering those Puseyistical notions which have so much endangered our beloved Church.

"I remain, your obedient servant,

"Mary ——."

Poor old lady, I hope she soon recovered the shock!

While still begging, I was on a visit to a most valued friend, a man of business, and a man of means, and, of course, I assailed him on the score of our needs. He defended himself for a time from my assaults, then laughingly tore off the flap of an envelope, and, throwing it to me, said, "There, I will give you whatever you can write on that." Seizing a pen, I wrote on the paper a check for a very fair sum (in a very small hand)—we had no check-stamps then to impede us—and yet left room for my friend's signature, which was duly added. Next morning I called at his banker's, and, after saluting the head-clerk, a most excellent, most exact, and punctilious man of business, presented the check. The good man knew

me well, but he was evidently taken aback by the check. He eyed it over and over again, turned it backwards and forwards in his hands, put on his spectacles, pulled them off again, scratched his head, and at last, with a most piteous face, asked me, "Do you expect me to honour this check, Sir?" "Of course I do, Mr. F——. You know the handwriting (my friend was one of the partners). You do not doubt its genuineness?" "Oh no, Sir, it's genuine enough, but so irregular, Sir, so irregular. This is not business, Sir." "Perhaps not, Mr. F——, but it is a good order; so, please, give me the money." "I must, Sir, I must; but this is not business. Thirty years and more have I been in this office, and never knew any thing so irregular." With trembling hands, and with a deep sigh, the tiny check was filed, and the money paid; and I left the good old man still shaking his head, sadly mourning over such an infringement of the propriety of business; and I believe it was a long time before he recovered from the shock.

One day, about the same time, as I was talking over the matter of our new church at a dinner-party in the parish, I said, "I have often thought of making a raid on the rich people of ——— (a town a few miles off), and seeing what can be got

of them. They come here constantly on pleasure or for health, and they ought to help us." "I wish you would come, Sir," said a gentleman just opposite, a perfect stranger to me. "If you will, I will go round with you and introduce you; for there are few there who do not know me." I bowed, and thanked him; and, after dinner, he arranged a little plan with me; and in that conversation I began a friendship — broken, alas, now, by death—with one of the truest-hearted, noblest, and best of English gentlemen; a friendship from which I derived no little benefit of the deepest kind; a friendship which, I trust sincerely, is to be renewed in a better world, when I also, as he now does, shall "rest from my labours."

Accompanied by my good vicar, on the day appointed, we met my friend, and started on our tour. He had a list in his hand of all the wealthier people in the place; and, talking their names over with us, he mentioned on whom it was worth while to call, and on whom it would be a mere waste of time to spend our efforts. Of course, we left ourselves in his hands, and followed him from office to office, from house to house, meeting with varying, but, on the whole, most kindly receptions, and were well repaid for our

trouble. One thing, however, we noticed,—so thoroughly did our friend know what he was about, that he told us before we entered each place what reception we should get, and what sum of money would be given us, and was only wrong in two cases; one gentleman gave exactly double what he expected; and one, from whom he expected something handsome, gave nothing. This last gentleman declined because he was building: "I'm in bricks and mortar, gentlemen, myself; I'm in bricks and mortar." "Then, pray, aid us to sympathize with you, for that's exactly the predicament we are anxious to be in." "No, no, not now; come again when I'm out of bricks and mortar." Alas, we never had the chance; for, before our church was begun, he was in bricks and mortar—but it was in his tomb!

One more incident of this begging I must mention. Collecting-cards were given to any persons who desired them; and one brave girl, a poor cripple, asked for one, and, dragging herself from house to house, brought us in a noble sum, chiefly in coppers, and all collected from the neighbouring poor. And here permit me to protest against one very common mistake in reference to the poor, and that is, that they do not like to be asked to give. My experience tells me

that the old story of "the widow's mite" is being re-enacted again and again amongst us, daily and hourly. Of course, I do not refer to the cant use of that phrase which is so prevalent, that, though I smiled, I could not be astonished at a rich old bachelor once sending me a five-pound note as "A widow's mite;" but I refer to the real giving out of "their deep poverty," of which so many are daily capable. In fact, experience has taught me that, instead of a man's gifts increasing proportionately with any increase of wealth he may have, they generally remain stationary, or rather decrease. The man who gave his guinea when every shilling was of real importance, often gives only his guinea when his guineas are of little consequence; and, in all my begging excursions, I have, as a rule, been more cordially met by people whom I almost hesitated to ask money from, than by people who had "enough and to spare!" I do not lay this down as an invariable standard. I could give many noble examples to the contrary, but simply state it as a matter of ordinary experience. Another rule in charity may also be laid down: the more quiet and unostentatious a person is, the more aid you will get from him in any worthy cause; the more ostentatious and loquacious people are, the less you will get from them

in a general way; their common excuse is, that "charity begins at home," and that "they have so many calls;" whereas, in reality, extravagance reigns at home, and they make for themselves so many calls. No self-indulgent person can be really liberal, for true liberality is an essential consequence of habitual self-denial.

I have been often struck with the seeming inconsistency of some persons who will lavish all they have upon you, if you pay them a visit, but who would not give you a shilling for the noblest object you could place before them. I know many who would lavish on me, as their guest, the choicest viands, the rarest wines; who would do every thing they could, at any expense, to make me comfortable, from whom I have never yet asked a farthing, simply because I know I should only waste a stamp in writing to them; but, in reality, this very refusal to give is perfectly consistent: their own taste is gratified by the reception they give me—it is one of their pleasures to receive their friends, it soothes their vanity to see them happy; but it is not one of their pleasures to give; and if they believed all the rest of the Bible, they would reject as spurious that quotation of St. Paul's which is to be found in the 20th chapter of Acts and the 35th verse. It is curious

also to remark how men follow lead in giving. Only get some leading person in a neighbourhood to pitch the first note for you high, and all others follow in the same strain; but let your first note be pitched low, and the whole neighbourhood seems depressed by the influence.

To return, however, to facts: my next experience in begging was on behalf of a diocesan association. I had much time on my hands; and, after the leading persons of that portion of the diocese in which I dwelt had been applied to, I undertook a general canvass of a certain number of parishes. As the country was in many parts but thinly inhabited, I had to drive from house to house, and met generally with a kind reception. But, though I can recall no striking incidents of that time, the same old rules came true—the greater the show the less the gifts, the more the talk the smaller the deeds. Two or three years passed by, and no need presented itself in my career for an appeal to the public, save one effort to assist a most excellent man to raise a large sum for which he had made himself responsible, in order to get a church, in the building of which he had been deeply interested, consecrated.

Here I became acquainted with another curious

fact in begging. Very few persons will give any thing to remove a debt after a building is finished; they seem contented with the idea that the fact is accomplished, and leave those who accomplished it to bear the burden of their deeds; and my advice to all who are engaged in such works is, never finish till you have got the money to pay all claims upon you. Mark, I say, *never finish*, not *do not begin;* for so many schemes are now-a-days started, but never carried into execution, that another large class of persons will not give till a work is begun. An eminent London banker, a short time ago, refused to give his name as a subscriber to a proposed church till the foundation-stone was laid, because, as he said, he had had his subscriptions returned several times after they had been paid, from the abandonment of the proposed scheme, and "nothing annoys me more than to have a subscription returned; it disarranges my accounts."

On taking a London incumbency, I found that my excellent predecessor had started many schemes, but had not had time to concentrate them, and some debts stared me in the face. Amongst these was one of £200 on the National Schools. In some parts of London a debt of £200 would seem a mere bagatelle, but in our

part, from reasons which I have brought forward elsewhere, it was a very serious matter. Calling to my aid, as "friends in council," my excellent and esteemed churchwardens, two men about whom I could say much, and that with the greatest warmth and affection, did I not know that they would scarcely forgive me for heralding their good deeds, we entered gravely into the question, "How is this debt to be wiped off?" Fancy-fairs had failed, and, moreover, we did not like them; it was useless to make applications to the public in general *for a debt;* the congregation had been fully taxed. What could be done? A thought at last was suggested, and acted upon at once. Some neat folded cards were procured—on the outsides were printed a statement of the case, and a short appeal for help; on the inside, columns for subscriptions were drawn up. On the next Sunday morning two or three friends were summoned to the vestry, a pile of these cards were laid before and divided amongst them, and then I preached a sermon in which I laid before my congregation—first, our mutual duties as members of Christ's body, and secondly, our particular need; and asked each person, who felt so inclined, to take a card, and return it to me at the end of the month, with five shillings at least collected.

After the sermon, our friends stood at the doors with these cards in their hands, and offered them to each person as they went out of church. The number of cards provided was large, far larger than some amongst us deemed needful, but before the congregation was nearly out all were gone, and an earnest call was made for more. Before the end of the month the debt was also nearly gone.

Overwhelmed with daily work, I did not dream of entering upon any more begging, indeed I had seemingly enough to do to keep our institutions going; but a necessity was suddenly forced upon me by a most interesting occurrence.

Our old Ragged-school was situated in a court where a dense population was gathered. Service was held in it, but the whole place was most inconvenient and uncomfortable. As I have elsewhere described the place, I will not now enter into particulars, but will only say that I had earnestly desired to see some better building erected on the spot, but that I had never seriously entertained the idea of moving in the matter. One day, however, my servant came in to tell me that two working-men wished to see me. I bade her show them in, and immediately saw two faces very familiar to me as regular attendants at the

Ragged-school service. I asked them their pleasure, and they told me that a small knot of very poor men had joined together to draw up a petition requesting me to get them a better building, and had also contributed amongst themselves two guineas to begin the subscription. They handed me the petition and two new sovereigns, with two new shillings, and then left me. I thought the matter over. I offered up a prayer to God for His blessing, and next day opened a subscription-list at my bankers under the name of the "Ferdinand-place Chapel-School Fund," paying in as first deposit the two new sovereigns and two new shillings of my working-friends.

While conning over my plan, however, the excellent Superintendent of the School (now a most earnest and hard-working clergyman) called on me. Together we drew up a short statement, embodying the facts I have before mentioned, and sent it off at once to the press to be printed on a card. These cards were pretty widely circulated, but produced little effect, and a great pressure of business compelled me to suspend operations for a while.

After a time, however, we recommenced work, and I wrote, in the first place, to a clergyman whom I had casually met, and who had promised

me aid if ever I should really endeavour to build a church on the spot. He was, I knew, a kind and generous man, one who, having a good income of his own, would not hold any benefice, partly on account of his health, and partly because he would not take the Church's bread from poorer men, but who yet was rarely idle, as he would take the duty of this man, because he was sick, and could not well pay for aid; or of that man, who required a holiday, but could find no one to supply his place. He answered my appeal by telling me positively that he would not give me a penny unless I would come and dine with him.

Evenings were very precious; it was winter-time, and scarcely one was without its positive engagement for weeks to come; but I contrived to steal away for one night. I dined with him, spending a most happy evening, and receiving a promise of twenty-five pounds. Just as I was leaving the house the thought struck me that my kind friend would really like to see what we were doing, and so I asked him to come up, take luncheon with me, and see our work. An engagement was made. He came; he saw all, and especially the old Ragged School, and, as he got back into his carriage at the end of the court, shook my hand warmly, saying, "Make it a

hundred, make it a hundred, and send for it whenever you want it." He drove off, leaving me doubtful whether I was standing on my head or my heels. Greatly encouraged, I next applied to a member of a firm who employed a large number of men in the neighbourhood, and who had before liberally aided me. He answered my letter by fixing a time to meet me at the vestry, to talk the matter over. We met; a few words sufficed to put him in possession of the facts of the case. We visited the spot together, and he also gave me £100, and just as he was leaving he told me to apply to his father, who also doubtless would give me help.

Here I must narrate a scene which perhaps may seem to enter somewhat too much into the records of private life, but which I cannot suppress, as it gives me the opportunity of paying a tribute to the memory of one who was as bright, gentle, wise, and kind-hearted a Christian wife, mother, and lady, as ever breathed. Foreigners have often remarked that, while other countries can rival the loveliness of our girls and young ladies, no land can produce women to compete with our matrons, and especially our elderly matrons, in beauty. Hers was a face which would most fully have borne out this description. Her hair was be-

coming white with the snows of many years, but her face had a staid beauty, a brightness of look, a clearness of complexion, a benevolence of expression, which would have taxed the highest art of the painter to portray, and which could not be gazed upon without pleasure. As directed, I wrote to the father, with whom I had then a very slight acquaintance; and in a day or two received an answer, that he was coming up to town on a certain day, and would see me on the matter in question, but he also added that he would give me nothing unless I would come and dine with him on that day. Again this was a difficult stipulation to comply with; it was the night fixed for our School Committee to meet. We had much important matter to discuss, and I knew not how to be absent. I spoke to several of the Committee, and at their earnest entreaty again stole away.

We sat down to dinner. The welcome was a most hospitable one, and my host spoke very much to me about the proposed school-chapel. He talked, but no promise of aid came. We adjourned to the drawing-room, and again he asked me question after question about the neighbourhood. I told him many tales about what I had myself seen, and he seemed much interested in

them, but still no promise of money. At last the clock warned me that I must be off. I rose to go, but before I could say good-night, the dear old lady of the house, of whom I have before spoken, rose and came across the room. Laying her hands on her husband's shoulders, and looking him full in the face, she said, "What are you going to give Mr. Spooner?" "What will you give, old lady?" was the reply. "I will give him £50." "Well done, old lady; I love to see you so generous." "What will you give?" was again her question. "Never mind, my dear." I now came forward to bid good-night, and, shaking hands with my hostess, thanked her for a pleasant evening. As I shook hands with my host, he said, "What do you think of my wife's offer?" "Am I to take it as seriously made, Sir?" "Of course you are; if you had known her as long as I have, you would know that she always means what she says." "Then, dear Sir, I thank her most heartily for her generosity." "That's right, so you ought; but she will think me very mean if I do not double it, so write me down for a hundred." Again I scarcely knew where I was standing, and left the house with a heart overflowing with thankfulness to Almighty God and to my kind friends.

"Ah," many will say, "you got on most prosperously; you could have had no difficulty in raising the money you needed." Good friend, you are wrong. The beginning of a subscription is almost always easy, it is the end which is difficult; it is often far harder to raise the last hundred than the first thousand.

My own congregation had been so taxed, that I could ask but little from them; so now I had to commence begging in earnest. My time was more than fully occupied with other work; so my only plan was to have a number of notes printed, with a short statement, and enough space for me to write two or three lines on each page, and sign my name; for experience has taught me that many will read your statement if there be only a line of handwriting to it, who will not even glance at it if it be all printed. A pile of these papers lay always on my table, so that, at every spare moment, every time a person came in to speak to me, or every time when I came home too tired to do any thing else, I could take up my pen and pack some off. Of course, I began with people whom I knew personally, then with people whom I knew by repute, then with people of whom I knew nothing; and of course many of my letters proved to be, like Mr. Winkle's shots, unhappy

orphans cast upon a thankless world. Of most of them I heard no more, but some scattered few returned, at times with kind words only, at other times with a few stamps, or some small donation, at other times with heavier proofs of good-will. Two facts, however, were prominent in reference to these returns: the poorer the person to whom you wrote, the more likely you were to get some donation; and the higher in rank and station the person you addressed, the more certain you were of a courteous reply, even if accompanied by a refusal.

Money came in slowly—very slowly, and it was necessary to adopt fresh measures. In doubt and difficulty, I consulted a friend—a most excellent and hard-working beggar, whom I deeply love; for while he would never ask a favour for himself, he is constantly begging for those "who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or other adversity." He advised a personal canvass of a large number of wealthy persons in the city, and promised to accompany me.

We started one morning, but our day was ill chosen. There had been some panic in the money-market, and it had crept into many a pocket. One man bowed us out politely, another stormed us out rudely, and a third began so fierce an attack

on us, that I was forced to take up the cudgels, and prove that we had no selfish motives, that we had undertaken a very thankless office for the sake of others, and that we were neither pickpockets nor ticket-of-leave men; till, at last, taken aback by being answered, my antagonist suddenly produced a £5 note.

In other quarters, however, we met with a very different reception. We were shown into a banking parlour, where sat both partners of the firm, men well known for every good word and work. "Your business, gentlemen." A few words told the tale. With equal promptness, "We give £10," was answered; a check was written, and we were dismissed.

In another case, we met a gentleman on the stairs of his office. He knew who my friend was, though personally unacquainted with me. "Your business, gentlemen." "We ask money to build a school-chapel in a court and four streets, containing 4,000 very poor. Our own people have done all they can; their means are small; not one of the 11,000 keeps a man-servant or a carriage." "Sensible people; men-servants and carriages are plagues; I keep neither." "They would, but cannot; you can, but won't." "Good!—give you £10;" and the money was instantly paid.

I will dwell no longer here on the varying fortunes of the day; but from the experience learned that morning, I am convinced that Mr. Cotton is nearly right, and that the willing, conscientious givers are but very few, and that, except where earnest Christian principles reign, the wealthier a man becomes, the less he gives. Again, your givers are divided into classes. One section gives to hospitals only, another to schools only, another to churches and increase of ministerial agencies only, and another alike to hospitals, schools, churches, ministerial agencies, and missionary efforts; but one thing I must say, that I never yet met with Churchman or Dissenter who subscribed to missionary efforts *only;* I have always found that just in proportion as a man took a lively interest in missionary efforts abroad, he was willing to aid in missionary efforts at home. Of course, I am speaking here altogether of givers—not of those poor wretches who come not only after public dinners, or where their names will be openly paraded; they are purchasers in the market of flattery, not givers, and verily "they have their reward."

Again: there are some persons to whom I have never yet sent a begging-letter, because I knew that every other person in need was sure to attack

them, and I would not add to the list of their tormentors.

Here, however, let me make one remark—not to verify the old proverb, that "two of a trade never agree," but to put incautious persons on their guard. Never answer what is ordinarily termed "a begging-letter," asking *for personal help*, without inquiry. Subscribe to the Mendicity Society,* if you can afford it, and send to its Secretary the long list of petitions from clergymen's widows, officers' daughters, barristers' nieces, and physicians' grandchildren. They will have every case honestly looked into; and while you may be fairly called upon to aid some very

* The recent organization, in several New England cities,—Providence, New Haven, &c.,—of societies for like objects with the "Mendicity Society," promises the very best solution of some of the most difficult questions of public and personal duty. Under such various names as "Relief Societies," "Beneficent Societies," or "Work-and-Aid Societies," these various local institutions are in mutual correspondence. In their local operations they seek the relief of the needy, and the detection of imposture, by inquiry into individual cases, and by a systematic application of the crucial test of offering help on condition of work. What they might accomplish at large in the discouragement of dishonest and professional vagrancy, will not be fully realized until they extend their arrangements for mutual correspondence to all the main centres of population in a considerable region. The resolute suppression of this crime, which is the nursery of crimes, would be equivalent, in itself, to the succouring of honest, helpless mendicancy.—Ed.

deserving cases, you will be preserved from fattening the greatest set of swindlers in London.

One anecdote on this point. I received one day a letter from an eminent nobleman, enclosing a letter addressed to himself, in which his aid was urgently requested for a poor, broken-down lady in my parish. Her tale was piteous in the extreme; starvation was nearly the least danger before her. Very odd, it seemed to me, that I had never heard of the case; for persons in trouble in the parish generally took the first pull at me; so off I started to inquire.

The direction was from a very neat and pretty little street, abounding in six-room villas. I knocked at the door of the house mentioned in the letter, and my knock was answered by a tall, powerful-looking young man, who, with a smart waistcoat, flash breast-pin, and Casino expression of face, smelt abominably of stale tobacco. "Is Mrs. R—— lodging here?" "No, sir, this is her house." "Can I speak to her?" "Pray walk in;" and in I walked, into a well-furnished drawing-room; and, shortly after, in waddled a round, fat, little woman. "Are you Mrs. R——?" "Yes, Sir?" "You have a comfortable house here." "Yes, Sir, pretty well; but I take in lodgers." "Ah, the young man who opened the

door was a lodger?" "No, Sir; he is my son." "Your son; is he in any employment?" "No, Sir; he is looking out for occupation; but it is not every thing that would suit." "He lives on you?" "Yes, Sir, at present the poor boy does." "Humph! is this letter to Lord So-and-so yours?" The reader may fill up the *dénouement*.

This anecdote reminds me of one or two more veritable cases, which prove with how much caution relief must be given. One poor woman, a decent and respectable-looking body, used often to come to me for help, and always with the same story. Her husband was a cabman; he could not get a day's work. I somehow always distrusted her, and called two or three times at her house to make inquiries; I also employed my Scripture-reader and district visitor for the same errand; but we were all alike at once distrustful and baffled. At last the truth came out. It was an absolute fact that the poor man had not been able to get a single *day's* work for two years; but, in the mean time, he had regularly driven *a night cab*.

Another tale was told me only last week by a dear and very shrewd friend. He was talking to the clergyman of his parish, when a poor woman drew near, and, with tears in her eyes, entreated aid to bury her dead husband. Her

tale was well told; but experience had made her listeners very cautious. A personal visit was promised to her house, and accepted. The woman went off, and was shortly afterwards followed by my friends, who, on reaching her house, went straight up-stairs. Admitted to the room, they saw on the bed a veritable corpse; the face ashy white, the jaw bound up, a penny on each eyelid, &c., &c. Ample aid was given to the sorrowing widow; and, with kind aid and sympathy, my friends left. Arrived in the street, before, however, the house door had been shut upon them, the clergyman missed his gloves; he had left them on the chimney-piece up-stairs, and both the friends returned to fetch them. The room of death was again reached; the door was suddenly opened, but all words of apology for the intrusion were cut short by words of horror; for the corpse was sitting by the bedside, counting over the money.

I tell these tales not to check any one's generosity, but to remind people that charity is essentially *a prudent virtue*. I could tell many tales of the great and timely aid often rendered by wise and judicious alms-giving.

But to return to my own begging. Slowly and with difficulty the small streams had dribbled in

to the chapel-school fund, though every spare moment I had was devoted to the object; but at last I collected the sum I had determined to gather before I commenced operations; and though I was suddenly removed from the parish, and was unable to complete the work myself, yet, handing over the money collected to my excellent successor, and my old friends the churchwardens, I had shortly afterwards the pleasure of being at the opening of the building, and of seeing a debt of £200, for expenditure beyond receipts, removed in one moment by a check from the same gentleman who, with his dear lady, had before so nobly aided me.

Removed to a new sphere of labour, I found that I must again commence begging. There were no proper schools in my parish; and two chapel schoolrooms were needed for outlying hamlets. Here, however, my task was comparatively a light one; for, calling together the leading persons amongst my new parishioners, I laid the matter boldly before them. A discussion followed; a ready response was made to my proposals; and though we had not one rich person in the room, £300 was at once promised, and a committee formed for a personal canvass of the whole parish.

We went from house to house, and everywhere met with the same willingness to aid. One day, as we were starting, a poor little boy called to see me, and asked me to take sixpence for the proposed school. I did, and thanked him for it, feeling it would bring a blessing with it; and before evening I had in the same pocket nearly £70, chiefly collected in small donations.

Next morning we began with a shilling from one who was "a widow indeed;" and we had nearly £60 to back it up at night-fall. To be so aided in begging made it indeed a matter of pleasure, "a labour of love;" and though all has not been quite smooth sailing, and we have had to encounter some difficulties, springing up from sources where we least expected them; yet, "with a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together," we have in two years built a large boys', girls', and infants' school, with an industrial laundry and kitchen, in the village, and a large chapel schoolroom in an outlying hamlet; and, what is more, we have, with comparatively little extraneous aid, paid for them. We have also been promised nearly all the money needed to erect another iron chapel schoolroom in another hamlet; but, owing to some local and peculiar circumstances, have

been baffled in all efforts to procure a site for its erection.

"Have you done now? are your begging-garments hung up?" Alas, no, dear Sir! When I was first promoted to my new sphere of labour, before I went into residence, as I was returning one day from a hard morning's visiting amongst the sick and dying, I was told by my servant, as he opened my house-door, that one of my new parishioners had called on business. I went into the room, and found him talking to my wife. Dinner was ready, and I challenged him to join us. He did so; we sat down to table; and, with the earnest straightforwardness of his character, he began to talk over parish matters. At last I said, "Why, Sir, you have got something for me to do! According to you, I must nearly rebuild the parsonage." "Yes, Sir, I think you must." "Then I must build new schools in the village." "Yes, Sir, I'm sure you must." "Then I ought to build one or more school-chapels." "Yes, Sir, I think you'll have to do it." "Then I must enlarge the churchyard." "Yes, Sir, that's absolutely necessary." "Then I must restore, if not rebuild, the parish church." "Yes, Sir, I think you'll be driven to do it." "Well, you are mapping me out plenty of work." "Yes, Sir; and

if you are not coming to work, I hope you will not come at all to us."

Well, with the aid of my earnest friend, and of his brother churchwarden, and with the cordial aid of my parishioners as a body, the parsonage is rebuilt, the schools are finished, one school-chapel is opened, the churchyard is enlarged; *but the parish church*—reader, it is a dear old church; some parts of it date back to the end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century; it needs restoration, it needs enlargement, but it needs also a loving and yet generous treatment. To do it properly will cost a good deal of money; all in the parish will help liberally; many will do beyond their power; but, after all, we shall have to look for extraneous aid. Do save me the labour of more begging-letters, and let me put you down in the list of subscribers.*

* Since this was written and printed in the first edition, the church has been carefully inspected by an eminent Architect, and has been found to be in a far worse state of dilapidation than we had previously deemed it to be. A beautiful plan for its restoration has been prepared, and the estimated cost of the work is £4,100. Several kind persons have already sent the "begging parson" contributions in aid. Good reader, will you do likewise?

CHAPTER VII.

PICTURES.

If a working clergyman were only also a working artist, he would never want subjects for his pencil, though the choice of them might expose him to the shallow criticism brought against Sant's exquisite picture of Steele by his father's coffin, that it was "so horribly melancholy." In this world of joy and sorrow, the tints of every picture must be mingled; and not only does the dark shadow hang across every scene, but the sense of woe, the "sentence of death in ourselves," pervades every heart. Gather a party of friends together, commence telling stories; tell tales of brightness, of hope, and of thankfulness, and few will follow suite; tell one tale of horror, and every one present will try to outvie it, each believing his own story to be the most terrible. Whence arises this, but from the deep sense that all of us, in this world, must needs "have tribulation?" blessed are they, therefore, who know how and in whose strength to overcome that tribulation.

The pictures I would now attempt to draw from the history of one family are all of them, in one sense, "horribly melancholy;" but, in another sense, there is a ray of light mingled with their gloom, which many will appreciate as of the deepest and truest hue.

At the foot of a hill, just at the edge of an old limestone quarry, stood a little cottage, inhabited by an old man and his wife. They were both very poor and very infirm, but very bright and cheerful. The old man had a chronic disease of the heart; the old woman was bedridden, and bowed double with rheumatism. Their house was in my first parish, and I was but little accustomed to sorrow when I first rapped at their door. "Come in," cried a cheery voice; and a still more cheery voice, when my dress showed that I was a clergyman, added, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord." I entered. The look of poverty was around me, the look of disease and suffering was in each face, but the cheeriness of each voice amazed me. I sat down; I offered to read, I began to explain, but I soon found that instead of being the teacher, I was the taught; mine was theory, theirs was practice; they had reduced what I had learned to practice, and were living out what were only lessons to me. I heard from

them all their tale of woe, all their sufferings, but also all their joys; the dirge was there, but the chant of praise sounded above it; the one was the under note, the other the upper and higher strain.

After talking a while with the husband by the fireside, I drew near to the wife's bed. For five years she had been bedridden, yet for all that time she had never lain down in bed. She was so drawn together by rheumatic pains, that it was impossible for her to stretch herself out straight. I began to speak to her. In my condolence I said, "You are very badly off, Mary?" No sooner had I uttered the words, than she drew herself up as much as she could, and looking at me with a look I can never forget, said, "Me badly off, Sir! Lord bless you!—no, Sir, I have such half-hours without pain, when I can lie and think of all God is preparing for me; and when I am in pain, you can't think, Sir, how sweet a cup of cold water is." Beautiful commentary on Trench's touching lines:—

"Some murmur when their sky is clear,
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue.

And some with thankful love are filled
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

"In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride,
Why life is such a weary task,
And all good things denied.
And hearts in poorest huts admire
How love hath in their aid
Love that not ever seems to tire),
Such rich provision made."

There was no pretence here; there was a deep reality—a reality which I saw lived out for more than a year. One day, however, I knocked at the door; a sadder and more mournful voice bade me come in. I entered; the woman seemed alone. One glance told me something had happened. "What is the matter, Mary?" She simply pointed to the deep chimney-corner; there in the recess stood an old settle, on which the husband made up his bed at night, but removed it by day. The bed, contrary to custom, was still there, and something was on it. I walked towards it, and saw that the old man was lying on it. His head was covered over with the sheet. "Is he ill, Mary?" "Look for yourself, Sir." I drew back the sheet, and saw not illness but death. My old friend lay there, calm and beautiful, every trace

of pain gone; the whiteness of death toned down by the deep shadows of the corner, and yet somewhat lightened up by the rays of the fire. On the face there was an expression of peace—perfect peace: the venerableness of old age and the beauty of youth combined. I could not but shrink back, but yet I could not but continue to gaze. "Ah, Sir, there's a sight!—thirty-nine years together, Sir, and never a quarrel. Bless the Lord, Sir. He's safe, and I shan't be long behind him." "When did this happen, Mary?" "This morning, Sir. He got up quite well; he read to me, and we prayed together. He rose to poke the fire, and just stepped forward, and fell. I couldn't stir to help him, but I screamed and screamed. Some men passing up the lane to the kilns heard me; they ran in and got him up, but he were gone. They laid him out, as they will soon lay me out; but thanks be to God, he's safe and free at last." I could not but glance from the one face to the other,—"sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing," was here; peace that "passeth understanding" was there.

She did not long survive him; but one day before she went, as I was talking to her, she said, "Have you ever seen our Mary, Sir?" "Your Mary! no; who do you mean?" "My grand-

daughter, Sir,—Bill's child; her's dying of 'sumption." "Where does she live?" "Just up the hill, Sir; but is that in your parish?" "No, but I visit there for Mr. Rivers; he lives so far off; his parish is so very large." "Oh, do go and see her, Sir; she's a blessed child." I promised to go, and went accordingly. I found the "blessed child" to be an extremely pretty girl of about seventeen years of age. To look at her at first you could scarcely think her ill. Her large soft eyes, her beautiful complexion, her long, soft, dark hair, the exquisite pink on her cheek, did not look like death; but there was also that bright transparency about the face, that deep flush under the pink hue, that brilliancy in the eye, that straining of the breath, which speaks at once to every practised eye of the already-signed warrant of death. I need not tell all that passed between myself and this younger Mary; I found her to be indeed "a blessed child," "full of faith and hope that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." She also taught me a lesson, how the young can learn to die. After I had been visiting her some time, I found her very anxious to receive the Holy Communion; and thinking her fully prepared to do so, as I was still only in deacon's orders, and my Vicar was ill, I asked the rector of a neighbouring parish to come

and administer it to her. He also was struck with her beautiful tone of mind and her great state of preparation for death; but his greater acquaintance with such scenes enabled him to perceive that her death was much nearer at hand than I had expected.

"Where is the girl's mother?" he said. "Oh, Sir, she's up-stairs. She was only put to bed this morning with another baby." "Poor thing!—she needs help. May I go and see her?" "Oh, yes, Sir," was the answer. He left the room. No sooner was he gone, than Mary turned upon me, with an anxious look: "May I ask a favour, Sir?" "Yes, Mary; what do you want?" "Mother's got a baby, Sir; it will be just fit to go to church when I am carried there: will you, please Sir, baptize it by my coffin's side in church when you are burying me?" "Why, Mary, why do you wish such a thing?" "Because, Sir, I'm going to the Lord Jesus, and I want her to be given to Jesus at the same time. Oh, do please promise, Sir!" I naturally at once promised to grant her request. She seemed quite delighted, and bade me good-by with double thankfulness.

In three weeks' time she died; at the end of the fourth week her body was brought to be buried. We had some interesting funeral cus-

toms in that part of the country. One was that every maiden was carried to church by six maidens dressed in white, without bonnets, but with white veil scarfs, which covered their heads, and hung down on the sides, in the manner of a nun's hood. The coffin had on it a white pall, and was carried under-hand by white napkins. All was white.

Another was that each mourner and bearer carried in their hands a sprig of laurel, and when the words "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," were uttered, stepped forward and cast them into the grave. This, of course, was emblematical of the resurrection; for the more the laurel is cut the more it grows. I met the procession at the gate of the churchyard. The contrasts were strong—the six girls and the coffin all in white, the father, mother, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, all in deep black; and yet, amidst the black there was one more white spot, —one of the aunts bore the baby, in its little white dress, in her arms. We entered the church. I went to the reading-desk, and read the Psalm and Epistle, and then went down to the font. The coffin was placed close to the font; I stood by its side (the mourners, in black and white, standing around me), my book resting on it as I

took the baby in my arms, and there, by the side of that still body, I dedicated the living child to Christ, who is both "the resurrection and the life," and who is the only true Guardian both of "quick and dead."

Mary was scarcely buried, before I heard that her aunt Sally was ill. I called upon her. Here was a new scene. The cottage in which she lived was old, like both the others, built under the hill, but it was, what they were not, intensely dirty and slovenly. The husband was a limeburner, the wife "a kilnsetter," or one of the women who handed to the kiln-man the baskets of coal or stone with which he charged the kiln. Both husband and wife were rougher than the roughest, and their religion, such as it was, partook of their own rough nature. Both, however, had been sinning against conscience to a great degree, and I found the woman terribly alarmed about her soul. I tried at once to point out to her the path of peace through the blood of a crucified Saviour, but long and dreary was the time before one ray of hope or peace reached that rugged bosom. She was dying of that most awful complaint, an internal cancer. Her miserable little bed-room against the hill-side was damp and close; neither window opened, and the smell which greeted me

on entering was beyond description. None of her family seemed to notice it; I warned and warned in vain. Every visit paid robbed me of my appetite for the rest of the day. But they "didn't see it." However, the miasma did its work with terrible certainty, for within the year after her death, her husband, her daughter, and her son—all pined away with various forms of those mysterious stomach attacks which utterly puzzle doctors, and for which they cannot give a true name.

At last, after many months' illness, her end was drawing nigh. At her own earnest request I had administered the Lord's Supper, which she had received with deep humility, and yet with a rough, strong, characteristic faith in her Saviour. Her mind seemed in perfect peace, when one evening I was suddenly called out and told that, "if I wanted to see the last of Sally W——, I must make haste there." I went down, and found her dying; dying, but strong and rough to the last. Her poor husband, summoned hastily from his work, in his rough hair-cap, short brown smock, ragged fustian trousers and gaiters, was sitting holding her up in bed; and by the bed stood her great slatternly girl, of about eighteen, very pretty, but very rough, and her boy, about

fourteen. "There, lad, thee howd me up. I'se going quick, my blessed lad. I'se been a bad 'un, but never a bad 'un to thee, lad. I'se loved thee well; but I'se been a bad 'un, and so has you, lad. But, bless the Lord, I'se had a turn. I'se going to Him. The angels came to me laster night, and told me. He's a blessed Saviour, and He's made me clean. Howd me up, lad, howd me up; I'll not keep thee long. Be a good lad; mind your church, mind your prayers. Don't ye go drinking and romping and swearing any more; seek the Lord, lad, and get the childer to seek Him; pray with them, lad. Mind how father and mother and our Mary prayed, and we ought to have prayed, too, more nor we have." Then, turning to me,—"Bless yer, Sir, bless yer, the Lord reward yer. Mind you see to my lad, Sir; he'll take on sadly when I'm gone, but see to him, Sir, and the childer; I want 'em all in glory. Now, Sir, I'se going: pray, pray!"

I knelt down and prayed, and had scarcely finished the commendatory prayer and pronounced the blessing, when the poor woman, who had followed every word, raised herself up a little, and crying out, "Howd me up, howd me up tight; I'se going! The water's deep, but, blessed be the Lord, He's here. Good-by, lad;

good-by. Praise the Lord. Don't ye freet, lad; don't ye freet, childer; the Lord's with me. I'se going!" and, with one deep sigh, she went; her muscles relaxed, her jaw dropped; and the rough limeburner, who was crying like a child, and upon whose dirty face the tears had made deep furrows, held in his arms—his dead wife!

CHAPTER VIII.

PASTORAL VISITS.

I AM fully persuaded that sick persons are often conscious of what passes around them, even when they seem to us to be perfectly unconscious, and even after they have lost all power of motion, and therefore all opportunity of expressing their feelings to us. Acting upon this conviction, I never lose an opportunity of praying by the bed-side of the sick, even when the patient is himself apparently unconscious; and not only in my form of expression do I pray for, but pray with the sufferer. A very remarkable confirmation of this impression was given me by a brother-clergyman,

in whose experience the following occurrence happened. As he was passing one day down a street, a woman stopped him, and asked him to come in and see her husband, who was dangerously ill. He entered, and found a man suffering from typhus fever stretched on his bed, in a state of coma. Turning to the poor woman, he asked her why she had not called him in before he became thus insensible, adding, "Of course I can be of no use now." The poor woman assured him that "her Jack was such an awful blackguard, he would never let any one come near him, and hated the very name of a parson." "Well, my good woman, I am sorry to hear that; all that is now left to us is to pray for him." They knelt down, and the clergyman prayed earnestly, concluding with the Lord's Prayer, which he repeated very slowly and deliberately, and then rose and left the house. The man continued insensible all that day and all the next, but at length, to the surprise of all, he suddenly recovered his faculties. He called his wife, and his first words were, "Molly, I've had a visitor." "You have, Jack," said his wife. "Who was it, Molly?" "The parson, Jack," cried the trembling woman. "The parson: and he said, 'Our Father.' Them were the words my mother taught me, and it would

have been well had I minded them. Molly, I must see that man again." The parson was quickly fetched. He repeatedly visited the man, who lingered on for a long time, and who, when he died, was to all appearance a most humble and devout penitent.

An occurrence somewhat similar happened once to myself. I had been away from home for a few hours, and on my return heard that poor little Willy S——, one of my Sunday-scholars, had been run over by a wagon, and was fearfully hurt. I went off to see him, and found that he had been with the squire's team to ——, to fetch grains for the cattle, and that, as he was coming down a steep hill, the wagoner having stopped behind at a public-house, the load had pressed upon the horses till they had begun to trot, and, as the boy was trying to stop them, had knocked him down, and the wheel had gone over his leg, crushing it sadly. The foolish wagoner, frightened terribly by the accident, had picked him up and put him in the cradle behind the wagon, and driven him home, a distance of more than five miles, without ever attempting to stop the blood; and the jolting of the mangled limb, with the great loss of blood, had reduced the boy very low. A surgeon was, however, in attendance, and he

was full of hope of saving both life and leg. He dressed the wounds, and promised to call again about nine o'clock. I spent some little time with the lad, as he was very anxious that I should read the Bible and pray with him, but I would not let him speak too long, as quiet was essential. About nine o'clock at night a rap came at my door, and the surgeon who was attending the boy was announced. He apologized for calling, but said that he had found the little lad much worse, and that the only hope he had of saving his life was to amputate the limb in the morning, provided the little sufferer was strong enough to bear the operation. He was anxious, however, to have the assistance of a famous operator, who lived a few miles off, and wanted to know whether I would speak to the squire about the matter, as he was not personally acquainted with him. Hearing his request, I asked him to accompany me to the Hall, which was about a mile off, and we walked together across the park. The squire immediately dispatched a groom to request Mr. F—— to meet the surgeon at the lad's house at seven o'clock in the morning. We then parted; and, on returning home, I called again on little Willy. He was worse, very feverish, and a little delirious. He knew me, however, and asked me to pray with

him. I did so, and then endeavoured to comfort his father and mother, whose grief was extreme. It was past eleven when I left the house. About five o'clock next morning I was awakened by some stones being thrown against my window, and, looking out, I saw my friend Polly, the village nurse. She told me Willy was dying, and wanted to see me. I dressed, and hastened up to his house. The poor lad was indeed dying; gangrene had set in, and had spread, not only over the wound, but over the whole leg and lower parts of the stomach. He knew me at once; his arms were round his mother's neck; he was trying to comfort her, and bidding her not to cry, for he was going to Jesus; the sight was overpowering. I knelt down and prayed. He followed my prayers for a while, and then gradually sunk back; the face dropped, the eyes were set, and he was to all appearance gone. The poor mother was frantic; with difficulty I got her out of the room, and with difficulty kept her downstairs while the necessary offices were performed. At last Polly came down and said, we might go up-stairs again. We went; the lad was laid out, his eyes were closed, a handkerchief was round his head, his hands were pressed by his side; the calm of death was there. The mother was more

frantic than ever; her shrieks were terrible; it was useless to speak; so, gently taking her hand, I knelt down again. She also knelt. "I can't pray! I can't pray!" she cried. I prayed; she was restless for a while, but at last a violent burst of tears relieved her. I continued praying, and had just commenced the Lord's Prayer, when Polly, who knelt by my side, shrieked out, "Look at the lad! look at the lad!" I looked. He had raised himself up in bed; and, as far as the handkerchief would allow, was endeavouring to repeat the Lord's Prayer. His eyes were open, but the hue of death was still there. The shock appalled us; but, commanding myself with a violent effort, I went on. Willy followed me in every petition, but with the Amen his eyes once more closed, and he fell back a very corpse.

I must not, however, conclude this tale without telling a little story about Willy's mother. The lad died on Friday, and the friends wished the funeral to take place about the next Wednesday or Thursday; nor would they listen to me when I told them that he ought to be buried as quickly as possible. The most I could induce them to do was to put him in his coffin on Saturday night. On Sunday morning, about six o'clock, Polly again appeared. My expectations were realized; it was

needful to bury the body that day; but Mrs. S. had no money in the house; her husband was only paid once a month, "would I lend her a sovereign?" Of course, the money was forthcoming, as a loan, though in reality I looked upon it as a gift. Within a fortnight afterwards I was taken suddenly ill, and was obliged to leave my parish, give up all ministerial work, especially that sphere of duty, and commence a dreary search after health. Nine months had elapsed before I was permitted to return, even on a visit; but, when I did go back, as I was taking a walk up the street on the afternoon of my arrival, I heard a voice, shouting after me, "Parson, Parson!" Turning round, I saw Willy's mother coming hastily towards me. "Oh, I'm mortial glad to see yez; I've wanted so to get out of your debt. Here's the money; I've had it in my pocket tied up in the corner of a handkerchief this eight months, and now you maun tak it." I did take the money, and was about to slip it into my pocket without counting it, when the poor woman said, "It's all reet, it's all reet; but I guess there's a sixpence over to coom back to me." I counted it, and sure enough there was twenty shillings and sixpence; an odd number of half-crowns and shillings having made up the extra sum.

While on this subject, permit me to add, that it were well if our wealthier classes were as particular in the matter of debt as the better sort of the poor are. Many, of course, are utterly reckless, and, like the notorious Lord Alvanley, look on "all they can run in debt in the year as so much clear annual income;" but with a large body of them it is far otherwise. They hate and dread debt, and their proudest boast is, "that they owe nothing." The very day on which I am writing this I have had a remarkable proof of this feeling. I called on a journeyman blacksmith's wife who had been ailing all winter, and found, to my surprise, that she was gone out pea-picking, though the afternoon was very wet. Her daughter who lived with her, said, "I think mother must be clean mad to dream of it." I thought so too, and was just leaving the house, when the mother appeared. I asked whether she was mad or not, and told her seriously that she was risking her life by what she was doing. The poor woman burst into tears, and said, "Only God and my own heart know my circumstances; and my circumstances drive me to it. My husband lost no time in the winter, but it was illness brought me down, as his money was little, and so I got behindhand a long way, and I cannot abear the thought

any one should suffer through me." "Yes, but you may kill yourself by exposure." "I know it, but I should die out of debt, and I could not abide to die with the thought that any one were any the worse, in what was rightly their own, for me."

One has spoken much of death, but ever as yet of the bright side of death. It must not, however, be supposed that we do not often meet with him as the "king of terrors." We see the death of stolid indifference, the brute's death in man; we see death met with trembling and awe, with mingled fear and hope, with holy, humble confidence, with bright rejoicing; but we sometimes hear the terrible voice of despair, the fore-echoes of judgment. There was a tradesman in the parish who was an easy, good-natured, civil fellow, but a thoroughly careless, thoughtless man. He had an excellent wife, a really handsome, but at the same time a clean, industrious, and striving woman. He had also the six prettiest children in the whole village, five of whom were the very gems of our parochial schools. The eldest of these children was about twelve years of age, the youngest a baby yet at the breast.

One hot June day, as I was coming down the village, I saw a crowd round the door. As it was

wake-week,* this did not at all surprise me; but, as I drew near, I saw through the open door that some men were carrying a seemingly senseless body up-stairs. I pushed my way through the gaping mob, and asked what was the matter. "Oh, Sir, Mr. —— is killed, or nearly so." I went up-stairs, and saw the tradesman just laid on his bed—alive, indeed, but frightfully crushed and wounded. It was but the work of a moment to cut his stock off, open his waistcoat and shirt-collar, loose his waist-band, raise his head up, and call to the people to open the window, and allow him all the air he could possibly get. "Has the doctor been sent for?" "Yes, Sir." "How did this happen?" "He met his man coming home with a load, Sir, and took the lead of the horses himself; and as he brought it down the hill, just above the house, the wagon swung suddenly, knocked him down, and crushed him."

* "In church history, a wake is a kind of vigil, or feast, on the anniversary of the consecration of a church, or on the day of the saint after whom the church is named. The wakes were usually kept with fasting and moral diversions, sometimes of a character by no means as sober and dignified as would now be thought congruous with a religious object. . . . . The feasting came to be abused even to intemperance, and, in consequence, numbers of the wakes were discontinued entirely in the seventeenth century, in the east, and some western parts of England, though they are still observed in the north, and in the midland counties."—STAUNTON'S ECCLESIASTICAL DICTIONARY, *sub voc.*

Poor fellow! he was still insensible. The doctor came in, looked at him, shook his head, and ordered the room to be cleared; asked me, however, to remain and help him. I remained; the body was examined, and the amount of the injuries ascertained. The wounds were fearful. "Is there any chance, Doctor?" "Very little, indeed; but we must dress his wounds." This was done; and, by the aid of some strong restoratives, the poor man was brought to consciousness. We asked him how he felt. "Very bad," was the reply. I spoke some few words to him; he shook his head, and, gazing steadily at me, said, "He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. I have known it all my life, and have never done it." I opened my Bible, and read a few verses. He listened, but only shook his head. I prayed by him; again he shook his head, and again the same terrible words were repeated.

The doctor, who had left the room, now returned, and, calling me on one side, said, "J —— is terribly hurt. I have done all I can, and must now leave him; but is there any one who can really watch him?" "No one," I said, "that I know of; but I will stay with him." "Will you? I'll call again at seven." "Do; but just tell me

first what to do with him." Accurate directions were given, and the doctor left, his parting words being, "He must be kept quiet, and the house must be kept quiet also; the least noise might cost his life."

As soon as the doctor was gone, I dispatched a boy for a woman, on whose nerve, courage, and coolness as a nurse, I could thoroughly rely, and, making arrangements with her, I went downstairs. The house was full of holiday folk—private friends, who had come from a distance, and who, of course, were doubly excited by the accident. To calm these persons, to point out to them how essential quiet was, was no easy task; however, by a little good temper and firmness, it was accomplished, and the house was cleared.

The poor patient was still quite himself and quite sensible; but, over and over again, with different depths of earnestness, we heard the same moan, "He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. I have known it all my life, and I have never done it." To change this current of thought, or to check it, was clearly impossible; there remained but one other course, namely, to attempt to modify or to divert it into a fresh current.

Very slowly, and from time to time, I repeated

sundry verses of Scripture, and some well-known hymns; and once or twice I gently prayed that the all-merciful Master would, for His Son Jesus' sake, visit and pardon this sin-stricken soul. Earnest attention was given to my words; earnestly were my prayers joined in; but, as soon as they were over, the old moan broke out again with terrible distinctness.

At eight the doctor came; the symptoms were declared a little better. Accurate directions as to the dressing of the wounds, and the necessary arrangements for the night, were given, and he left, promising to call very early next morning. Before he went, however, he entreated me to try again and again, but very quietly, to rouse the mind to some better hope, as he considered the mental depression must tell unfavourably on the body.

At nine o'clock I again went down-stairs, saw that the house and shop were properly shut up, and returned to my watch. The nurse aided me to dress the wounds, and rearrange the sufferer in bed, and then, at my request, went to lie down in a neighbouring room, to catch a little sleep, till her help should be again needed. The sufferer lay quite still, and dozed a while; but, ever and again, he started from his doze with the same

mournful cry. I read, I prayed; my efforts seemed to quiet him for a moment or two, but the calm was of very short duration. He was too weak for argument, too weak to be directly spoken to for any length of time; so I was forced to listen to his cry. For the sake of diverting my mind, I got some paper, and began to write a sermon, but no one will wonder when they hear that the spirit of that cry seemed to write itself into every page of the discourse.

About half-past three o'clock in the morning, just as the dawn of the longest day began to break, footsteps approached the room. I started up; it was the poor wife, who entered. She had been kept from the room because she was so terribly excited, that her very presence was dangerous, and had been induced to go to bed; but now, having partly dressed, and put on a dressing-gown, she had made her way to where her husband lay.

The sick man was just then asleep. She gazed earnestly at him, and burst out into a flood of tears and lamentations. It was in vain to attempt to soothe her; she refused to be comforted; so, taking her arm with a kind of gentle violence, I drew her from the room. She staggered rather than walked across the passage, and, pushing

open a bedroom-door, sat down on the side of a bed. What a sight was there! Two large, old-fashioned four-post beds nearly filled up the room; their heavy draperies hung in quaint festoons around them; while on them lay the children—the three girls in one, the two boys in the other. As the night was intensely hot, both groups of children had cast off all the clothes, and lay clad in nothing but their little night-dresses. Twined partly in each other's arms, and yet partly lying in the attitudes of those who felt the heat, they presented as beautiful a picture of sleeping childhood as the eye ever saw.

The mother gazed on them. Her baby was in her arms, and actually at her breast; and then, bursting into hysterical tears, and rocking herself backwards and forwards, she began to cry out, "What shall I do! what shall I do! Six such beautiful children, and the father a-dying! Oh, what shall I do! what shall I do!"

I stood by the open door. With one eye I could see the mother in her despair; with the other the father in his agony. The noise had awakened him. In the one room there was a candle standing on the table at which I had been writing; in the other, the gray dawn, streaming through the open window, gave the only light.

From the one came the sharp cry, "What shall I do! what shall I do! Six such beautiful children, and the father a-dying!" from the other, the low moan, "He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. I've known it all my life, and have never done it." Thank God, the children slept; but it was long ere I could in any way quiet their poor mother. At last she went off into another bedroom; and, as she told me afterwards, "was so stupefied with grief, that she fell asleep." I returned to my post; and, when I had let the surgeon in, at about six o'clock, and had wakened the nurse to help him, I left the house for a while. As I left, I could not help exclaiming, "Pray God I may never pass such another night!"

If the last was a sad scene, the next was, in some respects, even yet more sad. Working in the midst of a large town population, in a rough neighbourhood, I was not a little surprised to find that a messenger had come one day to my house with a note, written in a very ladylike hand on pink scented paper, requesting me to come as quickly as I could to see a dying gentleman. The note was directed from a house into which I had never entered, and about which there had always been an air of great mystery. It was a curious,

old-fashioned house, standing in a large garden, and had evidently once been a house of importance, but was, at the time of which I speak, surrounded by small shops and clusters of cottages, while the drawing-room windows looked on to an immense factory where hundreds toiled for their daily bread. No one could ever have supposed that any person who could live elsewhere would, by choice, have lived in such a spot; and yet I had heard that a gentlemanlike old man was often seen there, and that, wonder of wonders! he kept a brougham, in which he daily took drives! I hastened to the house, and was shown up-stairs into a sitting-room, in which I found a lady and gentleman seated on a sofa. The lady rose, and said, "Pardon me, Sir, for trespassing on your time, but my husband is dangerously ill; the doctor tells him that he has not long to live, and he is in a very distressed state of mind." I looked at the speaker; she was very tall, handsome, fashionably and elegantly dressed, and had the appearance of one who had mixed much in the very highest society. There was a fascination about her that one could not but feel, and my surprise was deepened by meeting her in such a scene. I glanced at the husband; and though I looked on a mere wreck, yet I looked upon one

who bore about him every mark of a gentleman, both by birth and education. The wife seemed to be many years his junior; yet he must have been, when they married, as handsome as a man as she was as a woman. I moved towards him; he beckoned to me to sit on the sofa by his side, and then, turning abruptly to me, said, "Sir, it is many years since I spoke to a clergyman on religion, indeed I do not remember that I ever did so before; and now that I am dying and frightened, what am I to believe?" His look told me that he was dying, but it told me far more clearly that he was indeed frightened, terribly frightened. His was not the deep repentance of a child who feels that he has transgressed against a most loving father; it was rather the abject fear of a slave, who has been just discovered by a master from whom he has been for years hiding himself, and whose anger he dreads. I pointed out to him the nature of true repentance, and the promises of pardon given to sinners in Christ Jesus. He listened eagerly, and then, like many another person in the same frame of mind, burst out into invectives against the inconsistencies of professing Christians. For some time all sense of the beam in his own eye was lost in attempts to *point out* rather than *pick out* the mote in his brother's eye; and I

have often noticed that while the true repentance of awakened love is the humblest, and therefore the most charitable, feeling in the world, the remorse of fear is the proudest and most uncharitable of all mental sensations. It was long ere I could stem the current of his invectives and bring him back to himself; but at last I succeeded in doing so, and after reading some portions of Scripture, and praying with him, I left him, his last words being, "Come again to-morrow, Sir, for I am very frightened."

When I left the room, and got down-stairs, I was waylaid by a stout, housekeeper-like looking woman, who asked me what I thought of his state. I told her I thought he was dying. She seemed much distressed, and said she feared so, too. Several children were playing in the garden, and one fine girl was in the drawing-room. I asked her whose children they were; she answered, "All mine, Sir."

I left the house completely puzzled; for I had ascertained that the old gentleman was a man of very high family, and that his wife had only come to him the night before I was sent for. Every visit served to deepen the puzzle; the wife seemed to confine herself entirely to the upper rooms, the stout housekeeper to the parlours and lower rooms,

and my poor patient's mind was evidently extremely agitated; but as I was never allowed to be alone with him for a moment, he did not seem able to unburden his cares, but always met me with the one cry, "I am frightened, I am frightened!" This terrible incubus nothing could shake off, though he was most earnest in his attention to all that I said, and seemed absolutely to crave for prayer. Other members of his family now joined the circle, and the strange mystery of the house was solved. The old gentleman had quarrelled with his wife and children some years before, and had suddenly left home. Every effort they could make to trace his whereabouts was quite unavailing; his agents had instructions to pay the rents of his property into certain bankers' hands, a fair proportion was as regularly paid to his wife and children, and the rest was drawn out by himself in checks evidently in his own handwriting; but every thing was so managed that no clue could be discovered as to his whereabouts. It was only when his doctor told him that he was dying that he had written for his wife; and it was only on my earnest entreaties, made at her suggestion, that he consented to allow his other friends to be summoned. But who was the stout housekeeper? Of course, certain suspicions attached

themselves to her, but they were utterly groundless. She was a woman of unblemished character, and had kept a lodging-house in the West-end. Suddenly this old gentleman had called upon her and taken her lodgings, asking her first whether she had a husband and any children. She answered that she was a widow, but had several children. "Ah, that will just suit me, for I love children," said the old gentleman, who proceeded to take up his quarters with her the same day, and, confining himself almost entirely to the house, to amuse himself with the children, caring for them like some old nurse.

At length, one day, having seen one of his family in the street, he called his landlady, told her that the place did not agree with him, persuaded her to look out for a house in some very quiet, out-of-the-way part of the town, and promised to be at all the expense of moving, and to compensate her handsomely for any loss. She consented, and took a house in which I found them, acting towards him solely and entirely as a housekeeper.

One morning, early, I was sent for, and entreated to come at once and administer the Sacrament to the old gentleman, as he was dying. I had not seen in him any such preparation of mind as was sufficient to warrant me in asking him to

partake of that holy rite; yet I of course went, and went prepared to administer if he should really and truly desire to receive. When I entered the room, I saw death stamped on every feature, but the mind was clear. I asked him whether he had sent for me of his own accord; he answered, "Yes, perfectly so." I spoke to him about a due reception of the Sacrament; and putting the last question of the Catechism to him, asked him whether that expressed his feelings. He said it did; that he earnestly repented of his sins; that he was thoroughly reconciled to all his family; that he had during that night entirely forgiven them, and received their forgiveness; that he was trusting solely in his Redeemer. Hearing this, I prepared to administer; but before I could commence, the old cry came again, "I'm frightened! I'm frightened! not now, Sir, not now; pray, pray with me, but I cannot receive now." I prayed with him; and then, having a most urgent engagement, left, promising to return at twelve. At twelve I returned, and found him still much worse; his only moan being, "I'm frightened, I'm frightened, but pray, pray!" I knelt and prayed; he was far too weak then to receive, even had he desired; and when I rose from prayer, he said, "Oh, thank you, Sir, thank

you, but I'm so frightened!" Again I was compelled to leave, but at two I returned to stand beside his corpse; and the last words that he had uttered were, "I'm frightened, I'm frightened!"

CHAPTER IX.

PASTORAL VISITS.

The excellent Dean of Westminster, in his most valuable Treatise on the Epistles to the Seven Churches, has the following remarks on the need of patience and perseverance in the work of the ministry, and the temptations to sloth which must beset all clergymen from the very self-imposed nature of their work:—

"Perhaps in our day none are more tempted to measure out to themselves tasks too light and inadequate than those to whom an office and ministry in the Church has been committed. Indeed, there is here to them an ever-recurring temptation, and this from the fact that they do, for the most part, measure out their own day's task to themselves. Others, in almost every other calling, have it measured out to them; if not the

zeal, earnestness, sincerity, which they are to put into the performance of it, yet at any rate the outward limits, the amount of time which they shall devote to it, and often the definite quantity of it which they shall accomplish. It is not so with us. We give to it exactly the number of hours which we please. We are, for the most part, responsible to no man; and when labourers thus apportion their own burden, and do this from day to day, how near the danger that they should unduly spare themselves, and make the burdens far lighter than they should have been!"

While agreeing perfectly with these sentiments, I would add that another temptation to idleness lies in the fact that we in our work see so little of tangible results, that our labours, from their very nature, must often seem almost in vain; and, as our ministry, if real, must affect, both in the first and deepest degree, the inner man—only reaching the outer man after a frequently long and doubtful period—the thought must often arise, "Am I not sowing in vain?" or, "May I not rest content with a decent perfunctory discharge of my duty?"

This temptation is often, indeed, deepened by the very way in which really excellent persons will wonder "why you will do so much where you meet with so little gratitude;" and as it was

from a disciple's mouth that the temptation came to our Master, "Be merciful to thyself, Lord," so it is often from those who ought to urge us on that we hear the word of chilly caution. But however this may be, it is impossible for the active, bustling man, who is always dealing with results, either in the way of success or failure, to estimate in the least the temptations to listlessness, if not to idleness, which beset those who have not only perpetually to sow, but have also to wait till they enter on another world before they can know what the real fruits of their labours have been. Sometimes, however, even amidst the greatest discouragements, we get that which cheers us on, and makes us feel that we are engaged in a real work. One such instance in my own career strikes upon my memory at this moment.

In one of my parishes I had often met and conversed with a small farmer, an inhabitant of the village, with whom, however, as he was no churchgoer, and rather a thoughtless man, I had contracted no intimacy. One day when he met me, he told me that one of his sons, who had been away in business, was at home ill, and asked me to call. I did as requested, and on presenting myself at the house, was shown into the room where the young man lay on the sofa. One

glance told me that the sufferer had tendencies to consumption—another, that those tendencies had been encouraged by dissipation. I sat down and talked to him. An opportunity soon presented itself in conversation, and I gently drew him on to the deepest and most serious topics. I spoke kindly, but firmly to him, pointing out strongly the errors of his past life, his deep need of repentance, and of seeking pardon in Christ Jesus. I then knelt down and prayed with him. When I rose from my knees, he bade me good-by, but very coldly, and with an estranged eye. I saw he was moved, but only so as to be nettled and angry with me. In a short time I called again. His mother came to the door; she showed me in, and shortly returned, saying, "It's very odd, but I cannot find him; he was here only a few minutes ago." I took her apologies, and left. Again and again I called. Once or twice I found him at home, but generally he had disappeared in the same odd way. Knowing that his mother was a strong Dissenter, I inwardly laid his absence at her door; but, as she always entreated me to call again, I could not but feel angry with myself for my suspicions. I left home for a while, and on my return found that the young man had suddenly recovered his health, and had gone back to

his business, and for many months no tidings of him reached me. After a time, however, his father again met me, and said, "James is come back, Sir, worse than ever, and he is very anxious to see you, but won't let us send." "Oh, I'll call at once." I called, and was admitted. He was indeed worse than ever, fearfully altered, but still not confined to his room. This time he seemed anxious to hear me, though he still felt sure he should recover. I visited him again and again. He seemed always waiting for me, counting the days between my visits, while all the time his mind seemed changing, opening, and ripening in a wonderful way. At last, on one occasion, when, after an absence of many days, I visited him, he met me with quite a reproachful look. "What a stranger you are, Sir! Why have you stayed so long away?" "It is not long, James." "Not long to you, Sir, in health, and busy; but very long to me, a poor invalid." "Why, James, you seem to like me to come." "Indeed, I do, Sir; there is no one on earth I love as I love you." "Was this always so, James?" "No, Sir, there was no one on earth that I hated as I hated you." "Why, what harm had I done you?" "You told me the truth, Sir, and roused my conscience when I wanted it to sleep." "Ah, but what used

to become of you when I called—could your mother really not find you?" "No, Sir, she could not; for when I saw you coming up the street, I used to hide myself in that cupboard. It vexed her very much that she could not find me; but though I dared not tell her so, I was determined not to see you." "Well, shall I leave you now?" I said, with a smile. "No, Sir, no. Promise me one thing,—be with me when I die." I promised that, if possible, I would, and then read and prayed with him.

The sick boy lingered for some weeks afterwards. I grew more and more attached to him, and he to me. In humble thankfulness I administered the Holy Communion to him, for I saw in him the most real penitence and faith, and I felt that his departure would be quite a loss to myself. At last, one Sunday morning, just as I had finished some weddings, a messenger came hastily to me to tell me he was dying. I hurried to his house, and found him much spent, but saw that his end was not yet. I remained with him as long as I could, but I had the whole duty to perform, and was forced to leave. After service I returned to him, and, as I had not another duty till evening, sat with him. He was very low and exhausted, but very calm. Once he called me to

his side: "Read me that text, Sir, you read me yesterday, about 'perfect in weakness—strength perfect in weakness.'" I thought for a moment, and then turned to 2 Cor. xii. 9, and read it. "Ah, Sir, there is all my hope—Christ's strength will be made perfect in my weakness. Take that text for next Sunday. They will bury me before then; and tell them all what a sinner I have been; tell them how I hated God's truth. Do not spare me; but tell them I died in peace, for God had given me repentance, and Christ's strength will be perfect in my weakness." I promised, and still sat by him. He was sinking fast. "Read that verse again," he whispered. I read it five or six times, and prayed with him.

It was evening; the bells were again dropping before service; I was forced to go. "Good-by, James," I said. "Oh, good-by, Sir. If we never meet here again, we shall meet above; but thank God I ever knew you." I left him most reluctantly. After service I returned, but all was over; they had just laid him out. I saw the corpse; all was calm repose; he was gone to find Christ's strength perfected in his weakness. It was a hard though joyful task to read the burial-service over him; and when, according to our custom in that place, a shower of laurel-leaves

fell upon his coffin from the mourners' hands as his body was committed to the dust, I could scarcely read on for emotion; and when, the next Sunday, I faithfully obeyed his last injunction, and preached to a crowded congregation on his favourite text, there was not a dry eye in the church as I told his dying message.

It is impossible for any one who has never laboured amongst the sick and dying, to know how deeply one becomes attached to persons in a long illness, and how much one misses them when they are gone; and yet, when we consider that in sickness the tinsel and outward trappings of human nature are stricken off, and the real man stands revealed, we can easily feel how those who have to do with this reality, if there be any truth and nobility in it, must become attached to their suffering friends. I have made, thank God, many deep friendships—friendships on which I can thoroughly rely, but the foundation of almost all of them has been laid in scenes of trouble and sorrow, in attempts to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort those that mourn; and in this sense I have found it far better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. It was in this manner that I really missed James very much. But his case recalls to me another

of a very opposite kind, from which one could also learn encouragement in work.

There was once in one of my village schools a poor boy who seemed, as it were, nearly an idiot. To make him learn any thing was an impossibility: if, as the result of a whole week's toil, he could repeat a collect or one verse of a hymn, I was amazed; and as for drilling any idea of figures into his head, that was utterly useless—two and two never would make four with him. Of course, this boy was put down amongst one's failures; and, when he left school for work, it seemed as if one had quite done with him. It was not so, however; for he was most regular in his attendance at Sunday-school and church; and he often caught my eye as he sat in the front of the gallery with a look of stolid immovability which almost fascinated me. On one very severe winter day I found him at some work which required him to stand in the cold with wet feet for some hours. On the next Sunday I heard that he had been frost-bitten; and, on going to his house, found the report true. One of his feet was affected, and was in a fearful condition. It was the old story, benumbed feet put incautiously too near the fire, and a bad sloughing sore established. After a week or two I got him to

go to the hospital, and there he remained some months, and was at last discharged "*cured*;" but minus a toe or two. All went on well for some time; but when the hot summer weather came, the poor boy was once again afflicted with a bad foot. The old sore broke out anew, and he became a pitiable object. The parish doctor attended him with the greatest skill and care; but all his efforts were in vain, the poor lad got delirious. Of course, I had often visited him, and he had seemed delighted when I came; but still his mind was clouded, slow to receive, and unable to retain impressions. With his delirium, however, there came a wonderful change; not one evil word ever passed his lips, not one murmuring or angry expression; but as he lay in bed he would repeat passage after passage of Scripture, hymn after hymn, collect after collect, till there seemed scarcely any limit to his mental stores. One day, as I knelt by his bedside, I used the first few petitions in the Litany; the delirious boy caught up the words, and, as I continued kneeling in mute astonishment, repeated nearly the whole of the Litany without a mistake; and his mother afterwards told me that he had done so several times. He never seemed to recognize any of his friends, though he received all their atten-

tions with a grateful smile, but he never failed to recognize me, and even knew my footsteps as I came up-stairs. One Sunday afternoon two neighbours came in to see him. They had been taking too much beer, and used some bad language in his room. The words seemed to sting the delirious boy, and in an agony he entreated them not to use them, and told them how wrong they were, frightening the men by his very earnestness. At last his end drew nigh; decided mortification set in, and I was sent for to see him. When I reached his room I found that all delirium was gone; his mind was quite unclouded. Somewhat of the old hesitation had returned, but he lay there calm, cheerful, and happy. He seemed delighted to see me, cheered me by his words, and died with a song of praise upon his lips. There was no ecstasy, no excitement about his death; it was simply a childlike, peaceful falling asleep. I could well pray, "May my end be as peaceful." I saw enough in this case to learn how easily legends might spring up to the hand of those who were inclined to manufacture them; but I saw also how truly the deepest spiritual life might be maturing beneath a crust of such heavy materiality in this body of our humiliation as could prevent any outward evident manifestation of the growth.

There is no mystery like the working of delirium. There are few of us who have seen much of it who have not some strange tales to tell of it. We could tell of the frightful imprecations uttered by men who were generally calm, self-controlled abhorrers of evil language; we could tell of words of fearful impurity spoken by gentle, delicate girls, whose very nurture would have seemed to have shielded them from the mere knowledge of what they were uttering; and I have myself been addressed by a young, delicate, and refined female, when she was suffering in delirium, with language which would have shocked many of the most degraded of her sex. This is a mystery I cannot attempt to solve; it may be an outburst of that fearful struggle recorded in the latter part of the seventh chapter of the Romans—an outburst permitted by the temporary unhinging of the will, the loss of its power to act up to its set determination to bring all things into subjection to the law of Christ. Leaving this matter, however, amongst those subjects of speculation which we can never, with our present knowledge, satisfactorily solve, permit me to remark how little a matter will give a turn to the whole bent of a mind when it is unhinged. There was a poor man, a great ally of mine, who lived

at one end of the parish, and with whom I often interchanged a few words as I passed and repassed his cottage. He had been for some time in poor health, and had felt very keenly the loss of a daughter, a beautiful girl, to whom he was deeply attached. His wife told me that he had never been himself since her death; and he complained to me perpetually of a deep depression of spirits. This depression I saw was both physical and mental; and, while I did all that lay in me to lead him to the only true source of comfort, I induced him also to place himself under the kind and skilful hands of a neighbouring doctor. At times the treatment he submitted to seemed to do him good; but he was constantly relapsing into his former despondency, in which, for a long time, there was nothing of despair or of dangerous mania. One day, however, I was hastily summoned to his house, with the tidings that he was mad.

On reaching his cottage, I found him sitting with a piece of newspaper in his hand, evidently extremely excited. The cottage was crowded with neighbours, all equally excited, and it was with difficulty I got them out of the room. "Now, friend," I said, "what's the matter?" With a slow and solemn voice he replied: "I

know my fate at last, Sir; I must cut my throat; God has told me so." "How, friend?" By this piece of newspaper, Sir. I knew something was to happen to me; and here I have read an account of a man who has cut his throat; and, as I read it, I heard a voice telling me that God had bidden me do the same."

Of course, I told him of his delusion, and reasoned shortly with him, but all in vain. I tried then to divert his mind from the topic; and, having given his wife a hint to collect and hide every thing like a knife, razor, or scissors, which she could find, led him out to take a walk, hoping to tire him down. He went with me; but, all the way, solemnly assured me that it was in vain—he must cut his throat. On our return the medical man called to see him, and, taking me quietly aside, said, "He must be taken to an asylum, and that soon; but to-night he must not be left alone; some fit man must be with him; meanwhile I will send him a quieting draught." I promised to get some one to watch, and, procuring a man whom I thought I could trust, went home to my dinner at about seven.

About nine o'clock a message came for me in a great hurry. The poor man had grown violent; he had overpowered his keeper, and no one could

manage him. I hastened down, and found him raging terribly because no one would give him a knife. The man whom I had set to watch him was useless with fright; his own family were as helpless. The poor maniac in his fury was dashing the furniture about at one moment, and at the next was banging his head against the wall. I walked up to him, and, looking him full in the face, bade him be quiet. He obeyed me instantly. "Sit down," I said, "in that chair." He sat down; and, taking a chair opposite to him, I also sat down, and began to talk to him, as if nothing had happened. He answered me sensibly, and, as soon as the women left off crying and sobbing, seemed quite quiet. As long as I kept my eye on him, he remained at peace; but happening, after some half-hour had elapsed, to turn round and speak to his wife, who had re-entered the room, the moment my back was turned he sprang up and began to beat his head against the wall. Again I bade him sit down, and again he obeyed me; and I began to think what was to be done. At my request, his wife went out to get some one to remain with him all night; but her search was vain; none of the neighbours dared undertake the task; and, with the utmost difficulty, one man was induced to stay, but only on condition that I

would also remain. I promised to do so; but first slipped out for a few minutes to a shop, bought some stout calico and tape, and, taking it to a neighbouring tailor, asked him if he could make a strait waistcoat. He could, and set to work at once upon his task, promising me to finish it before he went to bed.

Returning to the cottage, I found the poor man again in a fury, and with difficulty got him calm; but all the time, even in his greatest fury, he was calling out, "O God, take away this reproach from me! but thou hast bidden me do it;" and, when he was quiet, this was also his constant moan.

I pointed out his delusion to him, prayed shortly with him, and then read him some of the Psalms of praise and thanksgiving; and, as he listened, he grew more and more quiet, but could not be induced to go to bed. About eleven o'clock his wife retired, at my earnest request, leaving a bed ready for him in a little room next to the kitchen, in case he should feel inclined to sleep. I then commenced my vigil—my solitary vigil; for the poor man who had promised to remain with me, having been hard at work in the fields all day, had fallen fast asleep on the settle. My patient continued quiet, uttering only his low

moan, so long as I talked or read to him; till at last, putting my hand by accident into my pocket, I found in it a child's book, a small American tale, called, "Whip-poor-Will," which I took out and read to him. He listened with intense interest, and, at one peculiarly touching part of it, burst into tears. The tears seemed to relieve him; and, after he had stopped crying, he began to be drowsy, and I coaxed him into bed. Once in bed, he slept for nearly two hours, moaning out, however, even in his sleep; and when he awoke, he awoke more determined than ever to accomplish his purpose. He would get up again and dress. I suffered him to do so, and again we took our places in the chairs, one on each side of the fire.

After some time he dozed again; and, quite overpowered with drowsiness, I also fell asleep. How long I slept I know not, but I was suddenly awakened by something hot striking my face. I sprang up; the maniac stood before me, his hand terribly burnt, his face wild with rage. I saw in a moment what he had done; he had plunged his hand into the fire, snatched out some of the live coals, and thrown them in my face. This rather unnerved me, for I knew not what he might do next; so, waking my fellow-watcher, who had

slept soundly through all that had passed, I dispatched him to see if the strait waistcoat was finished; and then, turning to the poor sufferer, quieted him down again, and dressed his singed and scarred hand.

To my intense relief, my messenger returned with the strait waistcoat, and, taking it from his hand, I held it before the sufferer. "What's that, Sir?" "A strait waistcoat; put your arms in the sleeves." "Must I?" "Yes; be quick." He put his arms in, and folded them, at my request. I sprang behind him, and fastened the sleeves, and he was powerless. As soon as he was powerless, he became furious for a while, threatening and entreating by turns; but, after a short period, grew drowsy, and, when morning dawned, was fast asleep.

As he continued to sleep, I left him, strictly ordering them not to release him till either I returned or the doctor came. A man also undertook to watch him, and to take him out a walk after his breakfast.

Towards eleven o'clock I went back to see him, expecting to meet the doctor, and to arrange about his removal to an asylum. As I drew near to his cottage, I saw him walking before me with the man who was in charge of him. He seemed

talking quietly to his neighbour, when, as in a moment, he sprang to the side of the road, and knocked his head violently against a wall. I came up and seized him, and led him away, he again obeying me implicitly. We were just then at the bottom of the hill leading up to his house; and a pretty little girl, his grandchild, came running down the steep to meet us. Catching hold of him, she cried out, "Kiss me, Grandad." "I can't, my child; they've tied me up." I stooped down, took the little one up, and put her lips to his face. She threw her arms round him, and kissed him eagerly. He returned her kisses, and burst into tears. When I removed her, he looked calmly at me, and said, "You may untie this waistcoat for to-day, Sir." "Yes, I see I can," was my reply; and I immediately loosened the fastening.

We had no more difficulty with him, and towards evening got him away to the Asylum. There he remained some months; but before any permanent cure was effected, his friends foolishly removed him. I heard of his return one evening, and next morning the doctor called on me, his face showing only too plainly that he had just seen something terrible. "Poor H—— is dead," he cried. "How, Doctor?" "He has cut his

throat. All the knives were kept from him; but he saw his little grandchild playing with a broken pen-knife, and with that he managed to wound the windpipe and neighbouring vessels so severely, that he died of suffocation before I could reach him." Poor fellow! his end was a great shock to us all.

Writers have often spoken of the contagion of suicide; and we had a strange instance of it at that time. The next day an old man hanged himself in the village, and within a week a poor woman poisoned herself, and shortly afterwards a girl destroyed herself. This rapid succession of horrors alarmed our quiet country neighbourhood, and at the inquest on the last body the jury returned a verdict of *felo de se*. The step was an opportune one; the body was buried at midnight, and by torchlight, in a corner of the churchyard, which swarmed with spectators; but from that day to this, nearly fifteen years, there has not been another suicide in the place.

Horrors rarely come alone, and they seemed just then to come thick and fast in my path. My health was broken at the time by many causes, and by a hidden grief which I could not communicate to others, and poor H——'s death weighed on me. I went up to his house towards evening,

and, after trying to quiet his distracted wife, dropped in at a neighbour's house on my way home. I had not, however, been long seated, when the servant came in, and said that a man wanted to speak to me. Going out, I found a man from a group of cottages at the far end of the parish, who earnestly entreated me to come up and see his son, whose hand had been "tuk in a blast," while excavating the rocks. I asked him whether the next morning would not do as well; but he assured me it would not; the doctors wanted to take his hand off, and he would not consent to its being done till I had seen it, and had assured him that it must be amputated. Of course there was no more room for delay, so off I started. Arrived at the place, I found the poor fellow seated by the fireside, his hand resting on a table on a cushion, in the attitude in which the surgeon had placed it; but the surgeon himself had returned home to fetch an assistant and the proper instruments for the operation. The hand was in a fearful state; the great iron ramrod had been driven clean through it by the blast; two of the fingers were blown entirely out, and the stump of another lay on the back, twisted by the blow into a most unnatural position. He showed me the wound, and, as far as I could presume to

judge, amputation was essentially necessary. The sufferer, when he heard my opinion, immediately said, "Then it must be done; but pray for me, Sir, that I may bear it." I knelt down by the table-side, the father kneeling by me, and offered up a short prayer; but, just as I concluded, the old man uttered one deep sob, and sank on the floor in a fainting-fit. To jump up, unloose his stock and dress, and raise his head, was the work of a moment, but it took many minutes before the poor man returned to any thing like consciousness, and in the mean time the son was fearfully agitated. As quiet was most essential for him, the instant the father was able to stand we removed him from the house to his own, which stood a few doors off. Staggering, rather than walking, we reached his door, which was open; and pushing me in through the kitchen into a back-room, the old man sank down on the settle in another fit. I did all I could to rouse him, and turning round to look for some water, was horrified to see a woman sitting up in bed in a state of utter terror, her face looking as pallid as that of a corpse. "What, are you ill, too?" "Yes, Sir; I was only confined this morning. My brother's accident has nearly killed me; and now to see father like that!" Here was a new

difficulty; the father must be moved again; so making out from her that his own bedroom was up-stairs, as soon as ever he rallied I got him to go with me thither. Arrived up-stairs, I urged him to go to bed, and he consented at last to do so, on condition of being told when the doctors came to perform the operation. He was unable to undress himself without help, but at last I got him into bed, tucked him up, and then, at his earnest request, knelt down to pray with him. "I shan't sleep, Sir, but it'll quiet me." I knelt and prayed; and no one who has seen much of the stupifying effect of sudden and great grief will be surprised to hear, that before I had finished he was fast asleep, and never woke from that sleep till late the next morning.

Returning in thought to my mad patient, it cannot be out of place to remark how little one has to do with mad people now-a-days, owing to the excellent nature of our present lunatic asylums, and the good and wholesome regulations they are under. Let any one visit such an admirable institution as that at Hanwell—see the cleanliness, the comfort, the absence of cruel restraint, the skilful and judicious treatment exercised there over its 1,200 or 1,300 patients, and then think what the condition of these poor persons would

have been but for the wise and humane alterations that have been lately made in our laws on this point. There can be little doubt that much of the seeming increase of insanity is not real, but that now we have, what we never had before, accurate statistics; and now, also, the poor patients are collected together in huge buildings, instead of being left, as they used to be within the last few years, to drag out a horrible existence in garrets, cellars, or even coal-holes—tied down, half naked, half starved, kept in subjection by blows, and treated with a most savage cruelty. Happy is it that they who have to suffer from "*la perte des pertes*" have at least the alleviation of kindness under sufferings; and well would it be for all of us if we bore in mind the question put by a poor maniac to an eminent prelate of our day when he was going over an asylum: "Did you thank God this morning for your reason, Sir?"

If, however, some of the apparent increase of insanity is fictitious, much is terribly real. Insanity is on the increase, and must be so; the day is too fierce, the struggle and excitement of life too great, for many a brain; we live too fast, and many of us "become old men before we are young." Read any of our old writers and novelists, and see how easily our men of business took

matters only a few years ago, and see how frightfully they often overtask themselves now-a-days. I could tell tales of many a gigantic establishment which has rested on the seeming Atlas of one strong brain; but having proved too great a burden for that one brain, has crushed it to the ground, and fallen itself in the confusion of its ruin, driving the poor wretch who once supported it to seek refuge in "the padded room" of an asylum, or in the far more fearful darkness of a suicide's grave.

We have ourselves of late seen more than one famous public man driven from the arena into solitude, or carried off by attacks which might easily have been remedied but for the overstrained state of the sufferer's whole nervous system. It is marvellous and melancholy to see how such men go down at the first touch of real disease, and seemingly giants in strength melt away like foam as in a moment. I think it is the lamented authoress of "Aurora Leigh," who, after speaking of the seeming merriment of a poor fallen woman, exclaims, "Pray God deliver me from that laugh," that terrible aping of merriment by a broken heart; and any one who has seen much of overtasked brains, and has had to read much also of our ephemeral literature,

will often utter a nearly similar exclamation as he traces in the smart leading articles of the day not so much the true causticity of well-poised wit as the nervous irritability of noble, well-trained, well-stored, but overwrought minds; and will recall in a moment many a melancholy picture of men who, with intellects sharpened to an intensity of keenness, but with shattered physical powers, have worked on in misery, cheering others when themselves on the verge of despondency, instructing others while themselves in a mist of perplexity, and making others laugh while the tear has been rolling down their own cheek; all alike proving that the brain, which is a noble servant if rightly used, is, if abused, a most refractory slave. To any not used to much brain-work, or to those calm, dull minds which entirely digest one word or thought before they can conceive or utter another, this will sound nonsense; but it will come with a sad echo to many of us when we think of one friend in a premature grave from over brain-work, of another who is but a poor shattered creature in body, though his mind remains clear, and of another—saddest lot of all—who has recovered physical health under the total ruin of his mental powers. Would to God men who work with the brain could learn to be

"temperate in all things;" and would to God there were some heavy penalty devised for those masters of schools, and heads and tutors of colleges, who, in order to get up or increase the fame of their establishment, egg on youths of keen and therefore nervous temperament to over, because premature, exertion, and do not make it a matter of conscience to see that their pupils do take sufficient care so to train the physical nature, that the intellectual and spiritual may have a strong and healthy temple instead of a nervous wreck for their habitation! I write strongly, because I write with deep feeling, and with the memory of many a death-bed scene, or many a worse than death-bed scene. But while on this point my mind glides quickly to another and a kindred point, the fearful evil to young men of over-business hours.

"Pooh, nonsense!" exclaims some city Solomon, "don't talk of over-hours; look at such men as Lord Brougham or Lord Palmerston, and see what they can stand at their age, and cannot the young men stand as much?" "No, Sir; old men take things more quietly than young men; and, also, you cannot argue from the history of a few giants what ought to be the achievements of common men. I knew a dear old M. P. who is

in his eightieth year, and who assures me that a cold lobster with a glass of gin-and-water is the lightest and most wholesome supper he can take at three o'clock in the morning after a long debate; but few men of half his age could agree with him on that point; and I knew an old gentleman, of above a hundred, who used regularly to sup on toasted cheese and four glasses of port wine, but would you like to try the experiment? I can safely aver that, when I was an incumbent in a suburb chiefly inhabited by clerks and shopmen, I attended many death-beds of young men and women who had been killed by over confinement in shops and warehouses. I was attending once a very fine young man, of about twenty-nine or thirty, who was dying of atrophy. 'I brought this on myself, Sir, by dissipation.' 'How? I thought you had always been very steady!' 'So I was, Sir; but I overworked myself in business. I had kind masters, and did my best to serve them, and they allowed me to push on too fast. I used often to leave the City, go to the proper office to clear a ship, and then go down the river to start a ship, and make all my calculations in my head on the way down. I was well paid for my sharpness, and boasted of my memory, but now I'm worn out.' He was

worn out; poor fellow, he died soon afterwards! and though in this case he was himself more to blame than his employers, yet I have seen many and many a one who, to use plain language, has been murdered by the over-greed of his employers, and by the unfair hours of work to which he has been driven. 'Why did they not leave their place and seek some other work?' you may say. Ah, dear Sir, have you ever taken a turn at that dreariest of all tasks, the seeking employment in London? If you have, you will not wonder at a man or woman bearing any thing rather than leave a certainty; and if you have not, ask a few of those who have, how they fared when '*out of a situation*,' and you will wonder no longer at my statements, but you will join with me in saying, 'How fearful is the guilt of those who thus grind the face of the poor!' and in giving all honour to those 'meddling philanthropists,' such as the Secretary and Managers of the Early Closing Association, who have been for years endeavouring 'to let the oppressed go free.'"

One movement has certainly done an amazing amount of good in calling out the wholesale culture of physical strength in our day and in our great towns: I mean the Rifle Volunteer movement, which has already driven back, in a great

degree, the invading forces of several most essential enemies to the commonweal.

On this point I met with an amusing incident a little while ago, in special reference to that most gallant corps with that most objectionable nickname which has been produced by the Inns of Law. I was travelling with a young and ambitious barrister, and our conversation turning on the Volunteer movement, I pronounced it to be, in my opinion, one of the healthiest and most moral features of the day. "Most moral sir!" quoth my young friend; "most immoral, you mean. I consider it utterly abominable. Look at our profession! Owing to these detestable corps, what are our seniors? Why, instead of getting fat, puffy, gouty, and idle, as according to all the traditions of the bar they ought to be, and thus making way for us, there they are, sound in wind and limb, and able to do double work. If this goes on much longer, promotion will be utterly destroyed at the bar." Could I sympathize with this poor sufferer, think you? I think not; but talking of physical strength, in reference to insanity, reminds me of an occurence that once happened to me. There was a poor idiot in one of my parishes who used to interest me much, and often amused me by his inimitable mimicry

of all the sounds of Nature; while at other times he rather annoyed me; as, for instance, by once taking my pony from a cottage door, at which I had fastened it while visiting a dying person, and driving it into the midst of a pond to see it make a splash. One day this poor idiot came to fetch me to see his grandmother, a fine old woman of eighty-two, who was ill, and who had living in the house with her two very fine men, whom I had always supposed to be brothers and twins, they were so similar in size, height, and expression of face. One day I asked whether these men were twins. "Bless you, no, Sir; they are uncle and nephew. I was just getting about again after William's birth, when I heard that my daughter was put to bed at —— (naming a town about eight miles off), and was very bad. I went to her, and nursed her through her time; but just as she was getting better, she took a sudden turn and died. As she died, she put her baby into my hands, and said, 'Mother, you'll never forsake him, nor let him go into a workhouse.' I promised I would not; and as soon as she was dead I put the one baby to one breast, and the other to the other breast; and though it was a heavy snow-storm, wrapped my cloak round them and walked home and nursed them, both; and so you

see they have grown up to men. Ah! I was mighty strong in them days."

CHAPTER X.

PASTORAL VISITS.

How a sufficient remedy is to be provided for the overcrowding of the poor in their habitations it is difficult to conceive. They do not feel the evil themselves, and yet that very evil is the greatest enemy to religion, morality, and to every effort that is made for the social elevation of the people. The Lodging-House Act has undoubtedly done some good; but the evil in towns lies in the letting out of houses in separate apartments to separate families in a manner which entirely evades that Act; and in the country, in the way in which small proprietors, for an increase of rent, wink at every kind of enormity, and large proprietors refuse to expend money on cottage property because it is often unremunerative; yet the Squire will often spend on one election or one race, or Madam squander on one party, a sum more than sufficient to rebuild properly all the

cottages on their estates. Thank God, the influence of the public press of late has done much to ventilate this question, and to arouse the feelings of proprietors on this point; and I know many parts of the country where no complaints can really be made; but I have seen in country villages, as well as in crowded towns, many a disgusting and terrible scene.

I was once dining with a wealthy and influential young gentleman who had large cottage property, and was broaching my views on the subject. My host pooh-poohed me, and said it was a useless refinement to talk of three bedrooms in a cottage. I answered at once, "I will not argue with you, Sir W——, but I will tell you what I have seen this day in one of your own cottages. You know John F——; he lives in —— yard. He has a wife, a boy of five years old, a girl, a very pretty one, of above sixteen, and a lad of about eighteen. All these live at home, and have but one bedroom. I went to-day to see the mother, who has just been confined again, and who is very ill. I asked where her family were to sleep, as two beds literally filled up the room. 'Oh, master and little Jack and baby will all sleep with me.' 'And Bill and Fanny?' 'Oh, they'll sleep together in that bed.' Now Fanny is a modest, nice girl;

but how long will her modesty last? and you cannot wonder if she resorts to any thing or submits to any thing which may deliver her from such a situation." My story told, my host simply said, "Thank you, Sir; I will take care that in any future cottages I build no such occurrence shall necessarily happen, and I will remove the difficulty as soon as possible in all my old ones;" and he has well kept his word.

It is difficult for any one not used to such scenes to imagine the amount of misery which can be crammed into a small space. I remember once "a swell" of "Punch's" kind coming to lunch with me when I was a London incumbent. He was really a good-hearted fellow; his swellishness, long since worn off, being in some respects a fault of association, and not arising from a positive defect in the brain and heart, and yet he was laughing at "you parsons, who often say you see such sights!" A little nettled, I said, "Come, my dear fellow, I am just off for an afternoon's visiting, will you come with me?" "Yes, I will," was the reply. We went out. I am afraid I was a little malicious, but I turned into a small street, consisting of nineteen six-roomed houses, in which I knew that nearly four hundred men, women, and children, lived. The first house I

went to, No. 3, contained six families. It was the depth of winter; the weather was intensely severe; the people in that part were chiefly ground labourers or odd jobbers, and were for the most part out of work. The distress was very keen, and all we could do was slightly to alleviate it; almost all the furniture of the street was at the pawnbrokers', and the destitution, appalling enough in reality, seemed more appalling than it really was to those who did not know all the secrets of the place. When we entered No. 3, we walked into the first room on the ground floor. There lived a respectable old carpenter and his wife; they had some means to subsist on, and their room was comfortably furnished. The man, however, was melancholy mad, and could not be left for a moment. Nothing seemed to give him relief but my visits; and if I was able to visit him, read a chapter, and pray with him, he would be quiet afterwards for three or four days or a week. I read and prayed with him, my friend sitting quietly by. We then went to the next room; that was locked up; both husband and wife were at work. We mounted the stairs, and, knocking at the first door, entered the room. The stench that met us almost overpowered us. A woman, the wife of a rough Irish

navvy, lay on the bed. She was in the height of an attack of erysipelas, the face one mass of eruption. Four dirty, unwashed, and half-clad children lay about the floor; and, at the foot of the bed, lay another little child, who had long been an invalid, just drawing its last gasp, while the mother was too ill to attend to it. No one had been in to her that day, the window had never been opened, the slops never emptied; the husband was away on the tramp, looking for work, and the neighbours were frightened at her terrible malady. The moment I entered, the poor woman began to speak to me about her soul; and I had to read, talk, and pray with her, before I could get away to get a nurse to attend to her and her dying child.

As soon as I could get out, leaving my friend on the staircase, I hastened away to a good Samaritan, who I knew would aid me, and, giving her the means of procuring what was necessary for the sick woman and dying child, I returned to my companion.

We then tapped at the next door; and a little, thin, treble voice bade us enter. I knew I was going into a bright scene. A weak little boy, one of my scholars, lay there on a bed on the floor. The bedstead was pawned, and so was every thing

else but a broken chair and table; mother was out charing, father looking for work, brothers and sisters were at the Ragged-school.

"Well, Patsy, how is it to-day?" "Oh, very well, Sir, only the cough." He was dying of decline, hastened on by insufficient food. "Well, what shall I do for you?" "Oh, do read to me about Jesus!" Again I read, and again I prayed; and the bright, sparkling eye told me how earnest a listener and hearty a fellow-worshipper I was addressing. My friend could scarcely keep from tears, and absolutely frightened Patsy with the amount of the present he gave him.

One of the rooms above contained a man suffering from low typhus; the other, a child ill from some similar attack. Both were visited, and we descended the stairs. "Come on, my dear fellow; we have plenty more to see." "Oh, no," he exclaimed; "it would kill me to go into another scene; I never could have believed it possible." "Well, good-by, old man; but think a little before you laugh again at working parsons." He left me, evidently thinking, and I went on for some hours more amidst such scenes. Of course, I do not mean to represent this as an every-day occurrence; it was a rare case; yet I have often seen as much, or even more, in one day's visiting.

I entered a double room once to ask after some children who had not been to school, and found the whole family, with the exception of the father, "down," as they called it,—four ill with small-pox, three with typhus fever. I was sent for once to baptize a cabby's child. I entered the room about four o'clock in the morning. The mother and a neighbour, another cabby's wife, who had been put to bed about the same time, occupied the bed, with their two babies (the two husbands were sleeping together in the next room), and five little children were bedded down about the floor, which was as clean as it could possibly be under the circumstances, indeed the whole room was wonderfully clean. A candle placed on a chair, with a basin of water beside it, afforded me light and material for the service, so I commenced. When I was ready to baptize the child, I laid down my Prayer Book on the chest of drawers on something white. After I had baptized the dying infant, I turned round to take up my Prayer Book again, and saw to my horror it had been resting on a child's coffin. That coffin contained the body of another little child, who had died that day of convulsions, and who was to be buried on the morrow. What to do with the bodies of the dead is a very serious question with

the poor in our towns. The habits of our people make them revolt from the hasty funerals of the East; they *will* wait for some days; but what to do with the body sorely puzzles them. I have seen a mother ill of typhus fever with the coffin of her son, aged twenty, who had died of the same complaint, on the bottom of her bed. I have seen the coffin under the bed, under the table, on the table, on the chest of drawers, and over the bed-head. I am not speaking now of the crowded centre of London,—I have never worked there,—but of the outskirts of town, in parts which persons can scarcely be persuaded to believe are real scenes of want and misery. I cannot but think that if a small and decent mortuary chapel were annexed to some of our churches, the bodies of the dead would be taken there previous to burial; and yet, such is the force of habit, that it would be long before they would generally be used.

But, talking of dead bodies, I must relate one scene I once witnessed. One of my district visitors had told me that a sweet little girl of about seven years of age, one of my school-children, was very ill. I went next day to see her. She, again, was a cabby's child; her father and mother lived in a wretched mews; and you had

to go through his stable, behind the horses' heels, to reach the staircase which led up to the rooms where the family lived. It was sometimes really a work of peril to reach the stairs, when there was any horse there who had a tendency to kick heartily. I mounted the stairs, but soon found I was too late; the mother and father were sitting by the fire, weeping bitterly. The little one was dead, and was already in its coffin. I comforted them as best I might; and, when I had prayed with them, the father said, "Of course, you would like to see Fanny, Sir." I have none of that morbid love of seeing dead bodies which many show; I have rather a hatred of such sights; but I knew he would feel wounded if I hesitated, so I consented. He led me into the next room—a long, narrow loft, with open cross-beams, and a lean-to roof. In this room there was no furniture, save one small bed and a chest of drawers. The coffin was on the chest of drawers; it was one of those light-blue coffins so often used for children. In it lay the little one, in life as sweetly beautiful a face as I had ever seen, and now so calm, so peaceful in death! There is little terror in the sight of a child's dead body, for no traces of long years of responsibility are settled there; but "death seemed to have come most lovingly" on

little Fanny. I was naturally moved; but what touched me most was, the little bouquet which lay upon her breast. It was composed of the choicest light-coloured geraniums from Covent Garden, which I found the poor father had fetched that morning; expending, it is true, nearly his last penny in the purchase (as it was only February, they were doubly expensive); but he had done it out of love for his own little plucked flower. Let who will moralize on the folly of such an act of extravagance at such a time, I freely confess it brought tears to my eyes; and, kneeling down again, we prayed that, when our summons came, we might be ready to be transplanted, with that dear little flower, to our Father's garden.

THE END.

244.5

Spooner, E [redacted] Sp66

Parson + people

[redacted] 244.5

Sp66

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